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L E T T E R S

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Savary (Claude Étienne)
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university of paris

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L E T T E R S
ON
G R E E C E :

BEING A SEQUEL TO
LETTERS ON EGYPT,

AND CONTAINING

TRAVELS THROUGH RHODES, CRETE,
AND OTHER ISLANDS OF THE
ARCHIPELAGO;

WITH

COMPARATIVE REMARKS

ON THEIR

ANCIENT AND PRESENT STATE,

AND

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

GOVERNMENT, CHARACTER, AND MANNERS OF
THE TURKS, AND MODERN GREEKS.

Margaret Williams —

Translated from the FRENCH of M. SAVARY.

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M, DCC, LXXXVIII,

LETTERS

GENERAL

SECRET

LETTERS OF BOYD

TRAVEL THROUGH RUSSIA
AND OTHER PLACES OF THE
ARCTIC



AND PRESENT STATE

OF THE

GOVERNMENT OF THE
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

WASHINGTON, D. C.

1966

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lightened by the study of the fine arts, you
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I am perfectly of your opinion: the country
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these places, once the theatre of so many me-
morable events, will long continue to visit

them. But alas! instead of a free, learned,
and warlike people, he will find pusillanimous
and ignorant slaves, instead of flourishing
cities, he will meet with nothing but heaps of
ruins, and scattered and mutilated marbles.

LETTER I.
Yet if his researches be conducted by

Alexandria, 1779.

I ADDRESS to you, Madam, the follow-
ing Letters, forming a sequel to those on Egypt.
Deign to receive them with indulgence, and
accept them as the offering of gratitude.
They contain my observations on those parts
of Greece which I visited in the course of
two years. Acquainted as you are with his-
tory,

B

tory, guided by a natural good taste, and enlightened by the study of the fine arts, you prefer to all other countries that which had the glory of bringing those arts to perfection. I am perfectly of your opinion: the country of Homer, of Socrates, and so many other great men whom their virtues or talents have immortalized, has a claim to the love and veneration of all ages. The traveller of sensibility, led by the enthusiasm inspired by those places, once the theatre of so many memorable events, will long continue to visit them. But, alas! instead of a free, learned, and warlike people, he will find pusillanimous and ignorant slaves; instead of flourishing cities, he will meet with nothing but heaps of ruins, and scattered and mutilated marbles, instead of the famous monuments of ancient genius. Yet if his researches be conducted by sound sense, if he be exempt from prejudices, and correct in his descriptions, even this contrast will supply interesting objects and useful truths. You already have a glimpse, Madam, of one part of the scenes about to open to your view. The obscurity, indeed, in which they are enveloped, does not permit you to discern their effects. Let us approach them



them somewhat nearer, the darkness will disappear; we shall see them as they have been sketched by nature, for in her colours I shall endeavour to pourtray them.

I have the honour to be,
with the utmost respect,

Madam,

Your most humble and most
obedient servant,

SAVARY.

B 2 LET.

LETTER II.

To M. L. M.

With the utmost respect

Madam

Alexandria, Sept. 1779.

I AM preparing, Madam, to leave the city of Alexandria, where I have passed four months, since my return from Cairo. My stay here has been exceedingly agreeable, thanks to the kindness of M. Taitbout de Marigni, the French consul, who invited me to his table, and shewed me every possible politeness. I have employed my leisure hours in examining this city, its harbours and environs, and in describing them, as you have seen in my former work.

In consequence of the war between England and France, the Mediterranean swarms with English privateers, and our regular trading vessels no longer make their usual voyages. I have therefore been obliged to wait for a neutral ship, and have agreed with a captain of Zante, an island belonging to the Venetians, to convey me to Candia.

He

He is at this moment ready to sail, and I must hasten on board: Adieu, ye burning shores of Egypt! I lay aside with pleasure the turban, the long robe, and the mustachio, those necessary habiliments for every European who is inclined to visit these countries. Adieu, ye superb monuments, on which I have so often gazed with admiration and astonishment! I rejoice that I have seen you; but wish not to behold you a second time, till the country in which you rear your lofty heads shall be no longer under the dominion of a barbarous people. Adieu! ye ever verdant gardens of Rosetta and Damietta, and ye groves, the soft retreats of voluptuous enjoyment! How do your perfumes embalm the air! How delightful were the coolness of your charming shades, impenetrable to the ardour of a burning sun, did not death await the rash mortal who shall too thoughtlessly dare to enter them. Such, Madam, were my reflexions, whilst I cast a parting glance on objects by which I had been so deeply affected, as I followed the Zanthiot captain to the ship. The boat glided gently over the surface of an unruffled sea, and my reverie continued till suddenly it struck against the vessel,

when

when the shock dissipated the illusion, and I mounted the deck.

We have weighed anchor. A favourable breeze swells our sails, and wafts us from the shore. We have already passed the Diamond, a rock so called, situated at the extremity of the Isle of Pharos, which, when the sea is calm, rears its threatening head above the waters; but in stormy weather is entirely covered by the waves. Mariners must pass round it to enter the harbour; but its situation is well known, and it is easily avoided.

At the distance we now are from Alexandria, that city appears, in perspective, forming a semicircle on the shore. Part of the houses, illuminated by the sun, reflect a vivid light, and advance forward in the picture, while the rest, enveloped in the shade, appear in the back-ground. About them rise the slender Minarets, which seem to lose themselves in the air. The principal object in this landscape is the pillar of Alexander Seyerus*, which commands the whole city. This is the first thing discovered when we make the

* Commonly called Pompey's Pillar. See the author's Letters on Egypt.

land;

land; and the last we lose sight of when we leave it. Hail to the greatest column human power has ever erected! Still does this testify to travellers, that the arts have once flourished in this country, now the seat of ignorance and barbarism. Adieu! magnificent monument, which wert so often the object of my walks! Never could I be weary of contemplating the majesty of thy shaft, and thy enormous capital. But while I speak it lessens insensibly, and now appears only a black speck amid the vapours of the atmosphere. Has Egypt then so soon vanished from my sight!

It is not without regret, Madam, that we quit a country in which we have passed several years of our youth, in which we have beheld the wonders of antiquity, and purchased a few transient moments of happiness by an infinity of fatigues and perils. A kind of melancholy takes possession of the soul. The more lively our sensations have been, the more difficulty do we find in detaching ourselves from the scenes which gave them birth. We are perpetually recalling the images of objects, by which we have been deeply affected, and, recollecting them, feel
anew

anew every passion they have inspired. Not unfrequently do they excite tears, and we feel an irresistible charm, which we endeavour to prolong, till, fatigued with sensibility, it becomes necessary to give rest to the mind by transferring our attention to other objects.

I shall continue, Madam, in the course of this work, to describe, with all the exactness I am capable of, the places I may visit; nor shall I omit the reflections they may suggest, or my own feelings; in every situation. What can be more interesting than the history of the human heart? And how can this be better written than by faithfully relating the impressions made on us by each new object, and in every various situation?

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T.

LETTER III.

To M. L. M.

On board.

WE enjoy, Madam, the finest weather imaginable: not a cloud obscures the sky, and a south-east wind wafts us directly toward the port to which our wishes tend. We have now entirely lost sight of land, and, as far as the eye can reach, only view the immense abyss of the waters, and the vast expanse of the heavens. How awful is this sight! How does it inspire the mind with great ideas! How adventurous is man, who trusts his fortune and his life to this frail vessel he has built, which a worm may pierce, or a single blast dash to pieces against a rock! Yet in this he braves the fury of the ocean. But how admirable is his ingenuity! He commands the winds, enchains them in the canvas, and forces them to conduct him where he pleases. He sails from one end of the world to the other, and traverses the immense
liquid

liquid plains, without any signals to direct him. He reads his course in the heavens. A needle, which wonderfully points perpetually to the Pole, and the observation of the stars, inform him where he is. A few lines and points mark out to him the islands, coasts, and shoals, which his skill enables him to approach or avoid at pleasure. Yet has he cause to tremble, notwithstanding all his science and all his genius! The fire of the clouds is kindling over his head, and may consume his dwelling. Unfathomable gulphs are yawning beneath his feet, and he is separated from them only by a single plank. His confidence might make us imagine he knew himself immortal; yet he must die—die never to revive again!

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T.

LETTER IV.

To M. L. M.

On board.

I HAVE risen before the twilight, Madam, to contemplate at my leisure the rising of the sun. This sight, in the wide and shoreless ocean, is the most wonderful and glorious scene that nature offers to the eye of man. I shall endeavour to describe it, if not with all the eloquence and grandeur of imagery it deserves, at least, with as much fidelity as possible.

The weather is serene, the air calm, the freshness of the morning delicious. A light, but favourable, breath of wind wafts us gently along, and nothing disturbs the profound silence that reigns upon the waters.

The few stars which still sparkle in the firmament are about to disappear. Already the first rays of day pierce through the blueish vapour of the horizon; while retreating night collects her fleeting shades in the west.

The

The east gradually colours, and streaks the azure vault with purple. The scene varies every instant. Each object becomes more enlightened, and its colours more lively. What a scene at length opens! a thousand golden rays, issuing from one common centre, divide themselves in the air. The whole east seems on fire. The sun is about to appear; already I perceive his radiant disk upon the horizon. He appears to rise from the centre of the waves, and seems to repose an instant on the liquid surface, as on a throne. How is the eye dazzled with his splendor, while he rises majestically above the waters, which reflects his image a thousand and a thousand times! Hail, glorious luminary, great source of light to the universe, all hail! Thy presence reanimates every living being, and diffuses joy through every heart. Glory be to the hand that traced out thy path through the heavens!

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T -

L E T T E R V .

To M. L. M.

On board.

FIVE days have elapsed, Madam, since our departure from Alexandria, and our vessel has always gone before the wind. Had it blown a little stronger we should not have been far from Candia; but it has continued so weak that we are hardly half way thither. I never saw the sea more calm; we proceed as gently as if we were floating with the stream of a river. Nothing can be more agreeable than our voyage. Seated under a canopy which shelters us from the heat of the sun, and cooled by the refreshing zephyrs, which play among the sails, we continue to advance insensibly. Notwithstanding our progress is so slow, if the same wind continues all night, we shall to-morrow be within sight of Rhodes, which is but a small distance from Crete.

Till

Till five in the morning we have enjoyed the most delightful weather; but the horizon in the west appears now gradually to overcast; vapours, at first light and scarcely perceptible, begin to extend, heap up, and thicken. Already they form a circle of dark clouds, which like mountains, hide from us the last rays of the setting sun. Is this the fore-runner of a storm? Our mariners are of that opinion. We shall soon see how far their presages are right.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T.

L E T T E R VI.

To M. L. M.

On board.

THE fears of the sailors, Madam, were not without foundation, the wind has changed. The eastern gale no longer wafts us gently on our way. A torrent of air, bursting from the west, has driven us towards the burning countries of Asia, and opposes itself as a barrier to our passage. In vain do we struggle against its violence; we lose on every tack, and recede instead of advancing. Thick clouds obscure the face of the sun, and the darkened ocean is covered with foam. Roaring waves continually lash the sides of the vessel, and the winds howl horribly among the rigging. The over-stretched sails break with violence from the yards, and the masts bend and crack with the rolling of the vessel, which, every moment, seems ready to shiver into a thousand pieces.

All the sailors are in motion; the captain
is

is obliged to strain his voice to give his orders. The helm is confided to the most experienced sailer. Some attend the ropes, while others, clinging to the end of a yard, are taking in a sail, and, balancing themselves as the ship rolls, grapple a rope with their feet, and labour with their hands, at the risk of being precipitated every moment into the sea.

For seven days, successively, we have never ceased tacking; but in vain. We are continually losing way; and, should this weather last, we shall make Cyprus, or the coast of Syria. I am now convinced our vessel is but an indifferent sailer, and the crew extremely ignorant. Our sailors are Greeks, who know little of the working of a ship, and are slow in performing the little they do know. Never have they once been able to put the ship about with the head to the wind, so that as often as they change the tack we lose more way than we have gained. Nor has the captain more knowledge; he has not taken one observation of the latitude; nor has he on board either sector or quadrant, with the use of which he is totally unacquainted. He is equally a stranger to the use of sea-charts, or the method of measuring a ship's way by the log. In fine, he is a genuine

genuine boat-master, who finds his way in the day, by following the course of the sun, and at night, by observation of the stars. In cloudy weather, he steers as well as he can, by the compass, of which he knows not even the declination. I am almost tempted to fancy him one of the pilots of the ancient Greeks, and to suppose that he was at the siege of Troy, and that one of the fabulous deities has restored him to life, to prove to us the truth of the everlasting voyages of Homer's heroes. However that may be, I do not think we shall very soon reach Candia.

Our doubts are ended. We give up, at least for the present, all hope of reaching Crete. Wearied with fruitless struggles against opposing fortune, our captain has just turned his prow toward Asia Minor. We are going, he tells us, to seek for shelter in some port, and when the weather is more favourable, we shall renew our voyage. He does not know where we shall touch; but if he once makes land, he will do every thing in his power not to lose sight of it again. Thus do the Greeks manage a ship. As for myself, I begin to re-

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pent embarking with such a pilot. But
 the dye is thrown, and I must stand the
 chance. I have the honour to be, &c.

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 new out voyage. He does not know where
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 he will do every thing in his power to
 lose sight of it again. I hope the Greeks
 meant nothing. At present, I am
 yours

T. E. T.

L E T T E R VII.

To M. L. M.

OUR destiny, Madam, has suffered no change. The wind keeps constantly in the west, and has driven the clouds toward the frozen summits of Lebanon. The sky, at length, clears up, and we are bearing down upon the land, which has been announced by the sailors from the mast head. On deck, we could only discern something resembling a cloud, which enlarged and extended itself as we advanced. We now know it to be the continent of Asia, and the certainty of this has diffused a general joy; but still we are not free from anxiety. The captain having never taken any observation, knows nothing of our latitude, and cannot tell what land we are about to make. In the mean time, however, we keep advancing toward it.

Objects insensibly become more distinct, we perceive mountains, hills, and a promontory,

which running out into the sea, presents a barren shore and enormous rocks. Our sailors assure us, the high land, that appears in the back ground, is the Island of Castel Rosso; they assert we shall be at anchor there before night, and we are bearing down on it with a favourable wind.

We approach the shore, which seems destitute of verdure; but in fact, the sun is setting behind the mountains, and shines only upon their summits. The shade descends rapidly into the vallies, and the eye no longer distinguishes any thing but as through a veil. We are now, thank Heaven, entering the harbour of Castel Rosso, and about to anchor, at the foot of the rock on which that small town is built.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T.

LETTER VIII.

To M. L. M.

Castel Rosso.

WE have now, Madam, been three days at anchor in the port of Castel Rosso, which time I have employed in visiting the country, of which I can now lay before you an accurate account. But remember, that the truth here is hideous. The more faithful I am in my descriptions, the more will you be shocked.

This island is situated in the western part of a semi-circular bay, on the coast of Caramania, or the ancient Lycia. It is but half a league in circumference, and is only separated from the continent by a narrow streight. The coast is inaccessible, except on the side of the harbour, where there is a small town, consisting of about one hundred houses. It is built upon a rock, on the point of which is a small Turkish fort, which serves to frighten away the Corsairs. The space it occupies is extremely

tremely confined, both by sea, and a very steep mountain, above three hundred feet high, which has the appearance of a wall, from which huge masses of rock seem ready to fall upon the houses, and precipitate them into the waves. I climbed it with difficulty, and found on its summit a plain, about a quarter of a league in circuit, uncultivated, and nearly covered with grass, half burnt up. In the middle is a small chapel, very wretched, and very solitary.

From this eminence we discover the Mediterranean to the north and south, while the rest of the horizon is bounded by the lofty summits of Mount Taurus. When we descend into the town, we find ourselves in a bottom environed by steep cliffs, which lose themselves in the clouds. These are a circle of bare and hanging rocks, which, heated by the sun, reflect a vivid light, injurious to the eyes. Never did verdure embellish these melancholy shores; we only meet with a few bulbous plants, and thorny shrubs, which delight in such situations. Such is the prospect the inhabitants of Castel Rosso have incessantly before their eyes. It presents the image of eternal sterility; nor do I believe

the whole world affords a more desolate and horrid habitation.

You may imagine, Madam, how wretched the Greeks, who inhabit such a place, must be. They can neither sow nor reap. The island produces neither vegetables, fruit, nor grain. Their plantations are confined to about fifty feet of olive trees, and they have no cattle but goats, which climb among the rocks to find subsistence. To complete their misery, there is only one spring in the island, and that is almost at the top of the hill; from whence the women are obliged to fetch water, and I have often seen them labouring up a steep path, carrying large pitchers on their shoulders, and returning heavily laden, at the risk of being dashed to pieces with their burthen. Such a place of abode is not to be envied. Accordingly, the handsomest house lets only at twelve livres (or half a guinea) a year; and the bride who receives for her portion a foot of olive ground and a she-goat, is esteemed wealthy.

Fortune seems to have intended to recompense the inhabitants of Castel Rosso, by giving them indolent neighbours. In the time of harvest, they pass over into Caramania, and get in the corn for the Turks. They bring
back

back with them grain, wine, and various kinds of provisions. Their situation has rendered them seamen, and they make voyages during three months of the year, and return in winter, to enjoy, with their families, the gains they have made. Most of them carry on a trade in wood, which they purchase at a low rate, and sell high at Alexandria. For carrying this, they make use of decked boats, which do not stow much, but sail very quick, and require little care. They likewise supply their wants by fishing; and by these various means obtain a subsistence.

Could you imagine it, Madam; on this desolate spot I found a native of Provence, who is settled here, and connected in business with a Greek; they live in the same house, and are partners in a vessel. The former trades with the Turks, and purchases firewood, and timber for ship-building, in Carmania, which the other sells in Egypt, from whence, in return, he brings various articles which are useful here. They appear to subsist comfortably, and live in harmony together. The Frenchman considers himself as the agent of his nation, and renders his countrymen all the services in his power; in return for which, he

he receives from them some little presents. I have every reason to be satisfied with his politeness. To do us honour he killed a sheep, perhaps the only one in the island, and regaled us in the best manner he could, with Muscadine grapes, gathered on the Asiatic shore. The oriental customs were observed in every thing. We eat upon the ground, seated round the dishes, on the carpet, and, afterward, all drank out of one large cup, the only one, doubtless, in the possession of these partners. Next came coffee, and then pipes, of which we were obliged heartily to partake. I asked our host many questions, and among the novelties I learnt from him, the following appeared worthy to be preserved :

“ In my excursions through the mountains
“ of Caramania,” said he, “ I found at the
“ foot of a tree, somewhat different from the
“ mulberry, large balls or cones, of a white and
“ fine silk, much bigger than those of the com-
“ mon silk-worm. On examining the leaves, I
“ discovered the insects that produced them,
“ some of which were still spinning. They
“ were caterpillars of a blackish colour,
“ larger than silk-worms. I brought away
“ four of them, and sent them to the consul
“ at

“ at Rhodes; but they cannot have been received, as I have never heard of them more.”

I repeatedly requested my host to conduct me to the place where he had seen this species of silk-worm; but he answered, that, war having broke out between the Turks of that province, it was impossible to go so far. He promised me, however, as soon as peace should be restored, to send me some of them to Candia, with the leaves of the trees on which they feed. I relate these particulars, to induce travellers, who may hereafter visit these countries, to endeavour to procure some of these valuable insects. The trees which grow on the high grounds of Caramania would thrive well in France, and it would be an advantage to mankind in general, and a source of riches to our own nation in particular, could we discover and multiply a new species of worm which produces silk.

LETTER IX.

To M. L. M.

Castel Rosso.

WHILE we remain at Castel Rosso, Madam, I must not omit to mention some beautiful remains of antiquity situated at a small distance. I cannot say whether they are known; but I have never read a description of them in any author.

About half an hour's sail to the east of the harbour of Castel Rosso, is a creek on the Asiatic coast, situated in the widest part of the bay, and near a league in length. It affords a commodious harbour, where vessels are secure from storms. The first object that strikes the eye on approaching the land, is a vast amphitheatre built with beautiful stones, and of a circular form. It is about seventy feet high, and has eighty rows of seats, raised one above the other. At the fifth row from the top, you remark at each of the extremities of the semi-circle, a part surrounded by a balustrade, in which, doubtless,

doubtless, were the places assigned for the principal personages of the country. This immense amphitheatre might contain the inhabitants of a large city, and serve for public exhibitions given on land, or, possibly, on the sea. It is built with such solidity as to be proof against the ravages of time; at least it has hitherto suffered but little from its injuries. The arena alone has been wasted by the sea, which seems to have gained upon the land. Beyond this amphitheatre are a great variety of ruins. The most remarkable are disposed around a vast vacant space, and we especially distinguish the superb remains of a spacious building. Huge columns overthrown, others still erect, thick walls half demolished, highly finished capitals, and broken cornices, announce the ruins of a temple; for the ancients displayed all their magnificence in the edifices consecrated to the gods. At the foot of the rocks which surround the town, our admiration is attracted by tombs in perfect preservation, some of which are surrounded with columns supporting a dome of great solidity. Others are merely Sarcophagi hewn out of the stone. Several of them consisting of a sepulchral chamber, cut in the rock, have steps in front
by

by which we ascend to a peristyle supported by columns: Avarice, which tramples under foot the most sacred laws, has violated these respectable mansions of the dead, by forcing away the stones which defended the entrance.

Such, Madam, is the deplorable condition of this ancient and once flourishing city. The harbour destitute of ships, that magnificent amphitheatre without spectators, those piles of ruins, those tombs, despoiled even of the bodies they contained, inspire the traveller with melancholy reflections. Has the fury of a conqueror destroyed this city? Has it sunk under the ravages of time? or have man and the elements both conspired its ruin?

I am inclined to believe the dreadful earthquakes, which happened under the monarchs of the lower empire, have swallowed up the lower part of this town. The ruins we find on the edge of the shore, and even in the water, certainly favour this opinion. Another proof is, that, in the maritime towns, as we may observe Telmissus on the same coast; the amphitheatres were at some distance from the sea, and situated on such high ground as

to

to secure them from its waters. At present, when the sea is agitated, the waves enter that I have been describing, beat against the walls, and ruin the arena. The tradition of the country, too, is, that half of this city was swallowed up by an earthquake. I have not been able to learn the date of this catastrophe, but the fact appears indubitable.

The sight of the ruins of a city, while it afflicts us with melancholy sensations, only stimulates our curiosity the more to discover its ancient name, and what it was in former times. Let us endeavour to investigate these, and take Strabo, one of the most accurate of ancient geographers, for our guide. After describing the western part of Lycia, he adds,

“ Ascending the river Xanthus for the
 “ space of ten furlongs, we arrive at the
 “ temple of Latona, and, sixty furlongs above,
 “ the city of Xanthus, one of the largest of
 “ all Lycia. Beyond this is Patara, a con-
 “ siderable city, which has a harbour and
 “ several temples. It was founded by Patarus,
 “ and enlarged by Ptolemy Philadelphus, who
 “ called it Arfinoë of Lyeia, in honour of his
 “ queen. Farther on stands the city of Myra,
 “ on a high hill, twenty furlongs from the
 “ sea;

“ sea; and proceeding onward, we arrive at
“ the mouths of the river Limyrus; and the
“ city of Limyra, a league distant from the
“ seashore (a).”

Let us now examine the account of the same places in Pomponius Mela. This author proceeds in his description from east to west.

“ Beyond the promontory formed by Mount
“ Taurus, we find the river Limyra, with
“ a city of the same name. This district con-
“ tains several towns, of which none are of
“ any importance except Patara. The latter
“ is famous for its temple of Apollo, which
“ formerly was as much celebrated for its
“ riches and the respect paid to its oracles, as
“ that of Delphos. Beyond is the river Xan-
“ thus, with a city of the same name (b).”

Both these geographers, you perceive, Ma-
dam, place Patara between the mouths of
the Xanthus and Limyra, and in all that
space, mention no other city with a harbour;
it seems highly probable; therefore, that the
ruins in question are those of Patara, since they
are situated between these two rivers, and on a
harbour.

(a) Strabo, lib. xiv.

(b) Pomponius Mela, lib. i.

This may be further corroborated from history. Livy gives the following account of an expedition undertaken by the Romans against Patara: " Caius Livius, arriving at Rhodes, declared to the citizens the subject of his mission. Having obtained their unanimous suffrages in his favour, he added three gallees with four benches of rowers to his fleet, and made sail for Patara. At first a favourable wind bore them thither with rapidity, and the Romans hoped the terror inspired by their sudden appearance would favour their design. The wind, however, soon changed, and the sea became tempestuous, yet, by dint of rowing, they at length gained the land; but as they could find no shelter near the city, and the violence of the storm hindered them from keeping their station before an enemy's port, especially as night approached, they passed it and took refuge in the harbour of Phœnicus, not quite two thousand paces (*c*) distant from Patara (*d*)."

(*c*) Two thousand Roman paces make about three quarters of a league.

(*d*) Liv. lib. xxxvii. cap. 16.

The

The harbour of Phœnicus can be no other than Castel Rosso. The distance from that island, to the ruins I have been describing, corresponds exactly with the two thousand paces assigned by the Roman historian as the distance from Patara to Phœnicus. Besides, there are positively no other harbours but these two in this whole bay. To which we may add, that Stephen of Byzantium places, on the coast of Lycia, an island called Phœnice, which is, no doubt, the same with the Phœnicus of Livy (*e*).

These authorities united, I imagine, are sufficient to remove all doubt. D'Anville, in his map of ancient Asia, does not seem to have been perfectly acquainted with the situation of Patara, which he places a little too far to the west. He has also omitted entirely the island of Castel Rosso, but this was, probably, because it is so little, as he has laid down this whole coast on a very small scale.

This city was founded by Patarus, son of

(*e*) Phœnice is a town of Crete; we find also an island of that name on the coast of Lycia. Stephanus Byzantinus de Urbibus.

Apollo (*f*); it is not extraordinary, therefore, that the inhabitants should have erected to that god the famous temple, mentioned by Pomponius Mela, of which we still discover the ruins. Apollo there delivered oracles for six months in the year, and the other six at Delos (*g*).

Permit me, Madam, before I conclude this letter, to lay before you a slight sketch of ancient Lycia and its inhabitants, copied from Strabo (*b*). Lycia was formerly a flourishing republic, consisting of thirty-three cities, that had all a right to vote in the national assemblies. The largest, among which was Patara, had three suffrages; those of the second order two, and the smallest one. In these assemblies, the people elected their magistrates, and the *Lyciarch*, or chief of Lycia. Taxes were here equitably imposed, and the public employments conferred on those who would discharge them honourably.

(*f*) Patara is a city of Lycia. It received its name from Patarus, son of Apollo; Lycia was the name of the daughter of Xanthus. Stephan. Byzant. Hence the epithet Patareus is given to Apollo by Horace, lib. iii. Od. 4.

(*g*) Servius, in *Æneid*.

(*b*) Strabo, lib. xiv.

The

The wise government of the Lycians maintained a rigid morality; and, notwithstanding the bad example of their neighbours, they never abandoned themselves to piracy, nor permitted any dishonourable traffic. Victory could not corrupt them. After repeated successes, which rendered them masters of the sea from Asia Minor to Italy, they still retained their moderation, and the simplicity of their ancient manners. When the Romans, whose arms nothing could resist, conquered these countries, they were so struck with the wisdom of this republic, that they left them in the enjoyment of their liberty and laws. The only privilege of which they deprived them was, the right of determining on peace or war, in their national assemblies, without the consent of Rome.

What cannot liberty, morals, and a wise government effect for the happiness of mankind! Lycia, which formerly possessed these invaluable advantages, became happy and powerful. Her navy gave laws to the greater part of the Mediterranean. The ruins of Patara are a proof of the flourishing state of the arts in that city. Three and thirty cities in a small province sufficiently demonstrate its great population. What a difference do we

find at present! Despotism, like a devouring fire, has passed over this rich country, and its cities are changed into wretched villages; its inhabitants have disappeared, and the earth denies her fruits. The Greeks, who might increase and multiply, and insure plenty, by applying themselves to agriculture, prefer these scarcely habitable rocks to subjection under the rapacious tyrants delegated by the Porte to be their governors. Were the rulers of nations but to attend to these great examples which history presents; would they but deign to reflect on the effects of a just and wise government, and labour to establish it in their states, how powerfully, how gloriously might they reign, and how might they bless their subjects with security and felicity!

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T.

L E T T E R X.

To M. L. M.

From on board.

OUR anchor has been weighed, Madam, since day-break. The wind settled in the north promises us a good passage, at least as far as Rhodes. I must own I quit Castel Rosso without regret. The state of humiliation in which the Greeks live in the Ottoman empire, and the oppressions they suffer, can alone reconcile them to inhabit such a barren rock, where not one of the necessaries of life is to be found; where the horizon is bounded on every side by tremendous cliffs, and where they can only view that part of the glorious face of heaven which is directly over their heads. Yet do these unfortunate beings, attached to their prison, drag on a miserable life, without ever thinking to search elsewhere for a more agreeable habitation; so deeply is the love of his country engraven on the heart of man!

We

We have opened out the narrow straight that separates the island from the continent, and are coasting along the shore at the distance of two leagues. Our captain is determined not to risk himself a second time in the open sea: he likes to see the land. This voyage would be more amusing, did the coast present us with habitations, forests, and pleasing landscapes. But it is entirely desert; not a single village is to be discovered; the sun has burnt up the little verdure to be seen in the spring, and the eye can discern nothing but piles of rocks, against which the waves perpetually dash with a horrid noise. The distant horizon is terminated by the summits of lofty mountains, which, stripped of their antient pines, appear wholly without ornament. The shades, the Lycian groves, formerly the delight of the Patarean Apollo (*i*), have vanished. Be not surprised at this, Madam; the Turks are continually felling the woods of these countries, either for their own

(i) — Qui Lyciæ tenet
Dumeta, natalemque sylvam
Delius, & Patæus Apollo.

HOR. lib. iii. Od. 4.

use, or the profit they can make of them, and never plant a single tree.

All our canvas is spread, and the vessel rapidly cleaves the bosom of the waves, which whiten under its prow. We ardently wish to reach Rhodes to procure some refreshments, for our captain, accustomed to live, like his crew, on cheese, salt fish, dried figs, and a sort of biscuit made in Egypt, which is extremely hard, had only laid in fresh provisions for ten or twelve days, and we have now been seventeen at sea. The ancient Phœnice could furnish us with nothing, and we begin to suffer from famine, as if we were returning from a voyage round the world. We have nothing left but a little water, and black bread as hard as stone; but the sight of Rhodes, the mountains of which we discover, consoles us. If the wind holds, we shall anchor there to-morrow morning, and find relief from all our pressing necessities.

A new scene now presents itself to view! an innumerable multitude of swans and cranes are sailing on the waters, ranged in files, like soldiers in order of battle. Each of these files is upwards of a quarter of a league in length, and we have counted thirty of them, all swimming

ming in a similar direction. The head of this army terminates in a point, and resembles the prow of a ship. They all keep their posts, notwithstanding the motion of the waves, with which they alternately rise and fall; their plumage, which is of a dazzling white, forms an admirable contrast with the transparent greenness of the waters. Farther on, we discern another troop, disposed in the same manner: and all have their heads turned towards Africa, to which they steer in concert.

These birds, at the approach of winter, fly the snows and ice of the north, to seek a milder climate. They first arrive at the Black Sea, where they remain for a time, and when the cold begins to increase too much there, again take their departure with a northerly wind, traverse Asia Minor, and rest a while on the shores of the Mediterranean. They afterward pass this sea, partly by swimming, and partly by flying. In this manner they reach the coasts of Africa, and especially Egypt, where the great lakes of Menzala and Burlos furnish them abundant food. There they remain all the winter; but the storks, which appear to be fond of a still warmer climate,

mate, quit these lakes in November, proceed towards the Said, and end their journey at the lake Mœris, and the canal of Joseph. They free the country from innumerable frogs, insects, and reptiles, which abound in the marshes. Such is the regular progress of these birds. But hark! they are in full cry, their leaders have given the signal, and the winged navigators, rise in the air, and fly altogether, directing their course toward the south. To cleave this element also, with more facility, they range themselves in the form of a triangle: the vertex of which is a very acute angle. What wisdom is displayed in the actions of creatures which to us seem destitute of reason! Fortunate, perhaps, in not possessing that liberty so frequently abused by man; they do not counteract the views of nature, and enjoy, without alloy, that portion of happiness assigned them by the Creator.

The isle of Rhodes is now in full view, and presents a range of hills resembling an amphitheatre, and terminated by a lofty mountain. We are going as near the wind as possible, and with a crowd of sail, to gain the harbour. But we shall not reach it before night. Already the sun is setting behind the mountains, which

which hide him from us, while his radiant beams still streak the clouds with gold and purple! How vivid are their colours! Some of them centering thousands of his rays, again reflect them, and resemble globes of fire floating through the air. Others, the lower parts of which are entirely dark, assume the appearance of dusky mountains of various forms, and emit, from their luminous points, the flash of the ruby, or the fire of the topaz; some opening in the centre, and edged with the brightest and liveliest colours, exhibit the azure of the sky set in gold. Others diversified with fatty stripes, are slightly bounded with a yellowish border. How admirable, how magnificent, is this scene! What a sublime idea does it give of Him who said, *Let there be light, and there was light!* Night has thrown her dark veil over this glorious picture, yet the eye remains still fixed on the heavens, and the soul still feels deeply penetrated with sentiments of admiration and gratitude. How great are the works of the Creator! and how feeble the conceptions of man!

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T-

L E T T E R X I.

T O M. L. M.

WE flattered ourselves too soon, Madam, that we should have been able yesterday to enter Rhodes; but this was to rely too much on the constancy of the wind, which changed suddenly in the night, and obliged us to continue tacking before the island. We have been very near it, and its groves, deliciously verdant, seemed to invite us to take shelter in their shades. The town, whose lofty towers we could distinctly discern, appeared to offer us the provisions of which we stood so much in need, and every thing contributed to heighten our desires; but, like Tantalus, we were only permitted to gratify our eyes. The westerly wind, which has so often proved contrary, has once more deceived our expectations, and after tacking for a whole day and night, our captain, who never struggles obstinately against fortune, has a second time steered for
the

the coast of Asia, and taken refuge in the gulph of Macri, in which we have this morning cast anchor.

The gulph of Macri, or, as it was formerly called, Glaucus, runs about six miles into the land, between two very high shores, which bound it to the east and west. It gradually becomes narrower, and terminates in a beautiful valley, at the entrance of which stands a small village inhabited by Greeks. We lost no time in getting ashore, in order to procure refreshments; but, unfortunately, a Turkish caravelle, which lay there at anchor, had carried off every thing. We have not found so much as a single morsel of bread. They have promised to bake us some; and we hope to *breakfast* this *evening* with a very hearty appetite.

In the mean time, I have been to examine the valley, and the remains of antiquity it contains. Whilst I was pursuing the winding of a rivulet that waters it, known formerly by the name of the river Glaucus, I discovered, on its banks, a very large fig-tree, loaded with fruit. Several wine shoots, which grew at its root, held it in close embrace, and mingled their green branches with its foliage, through

through which might be seen clusters of purple grapes, and figs beginning to turn yellow. With what delight my eye dwelt upon this beautiful tree! and how did I bless my good fortune, which had conducted me to this spot! I instantly flew to seize the prize. How excellent a regale are figs and grapes, when for four-and-twenty hours you have had no other sustenance than a morsel of black bread as hard as a stone, and only brandy to quench your thirst! Never did I make so delicious a repast. The fruits were of an exquisite flavour; I thought I never could be satisfied. As soon as my hunger was appeased, I recollected the rill which bathed the foot of my benefactor, and took a most reviving draught. The pure and limpid water appeared far preferable to the finest flavoured wines. This adventure naturally led me to reflect on the many wretched beings who are perishing with want, whilst others are revelling in abundance. Ah! let those who read this feel compassion when poverty, with down-cast eyes, and pallid countenance, shall say to them in a faltering voice, *I am hungry*:—for hunger is indeed a most cruel torture.

Telmiffus was built at the foot of a hill,
which

which bounds the valley to the east (*k*). The ancients, who agree in the situation of this town, make it a dependency, according to some of Caria, and to others of Lycia; doubtless, from its being on the boundaries of both these provinces. But this question may, perhaps, be best determined by referring to the accurate Strabo (*l*).

“ Beyond mount Dædalus, which is in
 “ Lycia, we find in the same province the
 “ small town of Telmessus, with a pro-
 “ montory of the same name, near which is
 “ a harbour. We next arrive at mount Cra-
 “ gus, remarkable for its eight summits, and
 “ which has given birth to the fable of the
 “ Chimera. At the foot of this mountain
 “ we perceive a steep hill rising from the sea,
 “ still known by the name of Chimera.” This
 hill, according to Pliny (*m*), casts forth flames
 during

(*k*) Thelmeffus is a town of Caria. Cicero de Divinatione, lib. i. Stephen of Byzantium, de Urbibus, says, Telmessus is a town of Caria; but Philo and Strabo place it in Lycia. In fact, it is near Mount Dedalus, and is on the boundaries of each of those provinces. Thelmissus terminates Lycia on the west. Pomponius Mela.

(*l*) Strabo, lib. xiv.

(*m*) Mons Chimæra noctibus flagrans. Plin. lib. v. cap. 27.

during the night ; and hence the origin of the fable.

Telmiffus was not a very considerable town. Strabo does not reckon it among those which had the right of giving three suffrages in the national assemblies. But it was renowned for its soothsayers. Here, says Cicero, the science of augury especially flourished (*n*). Its port is sheltered from every wind, being defended to the west by mount Dædalus, to the east by the promontory of Telmiffus, to the north by high hills, which form the basis of mount Cragus, and to the south by small islands, which, lying across the gulph, break the violence of the waves. Even at present, vessels which meet with storms may anchor there with safety. This advantage, the most important of any for maritime towns, rendered commerce and the arts flourishing at Telmiffus, as is sufficiently proved by the beautiful theatre we still admire. It is built fronting the harbour, within the hill, which overtops it on the east ; it is of a semi-circular form, and has

Mount Chimera, situated in Lycia, throws out flames during the night.

(*n*) Cicero de Divinatione, lib. i.

twenty-

twenty-four rows of seats. You enter the arena by three gates, of very simple architecture. The right side of it, which is built against the hill, is thrown down, and the seats, displaced, are piled up without order; but the rest is in tolerable preservation. This theatre is much less than that of Patara, is neither so large nor so magnificent, nor has it been so well able to resist the ravages of time. We cannot doubt but these edifices were proportioned to the extent and power of the cities by which they were built. I saw the name of Monsieur de Choiseul Gouffier inscribed on the stones of the theatre of Telmissus, which he had caused to be engraved with care.

At a little distance, proceeding round the same hill toward the north, we meet with a great number of tombs hewn out of the rock. They are in the same style with those of Patara, but not so magnificent. The most remarkable have a peristyle, supported by columns in front. But the thirst of gold has not spared these any more than the others; they have almost all been violated. The stones which closed them, and the bodies they contained, have been carried away, a great number

number of them are only simple Sarcophagi cut in the stone. Beyond, we find the ruins of a castle, which served perhaps as a citadel to Telmissus (o); nothing more is left of this ancient town. Moss and briars almost entirely cover its mausolea. I remarked in the environs young plane-trees, and tufts of myrtle, which somewhat consoled me for the sad scene I had before my eyes.

Fatigued by climbing up rocks during a great part of the day, and scorched by the heat of the sun, I returned to the banks of the charming rivulet, and the foot of my beloved fig-tree. I there found a refreshing shade, delicious fruits, and the comforts of repose. Nothing disturbs the tranquillity of this delightful spot. No noise of carriages, no tumult, not even the sound of a human voice. Every thing here is peaceful and silent. Scarcely does the zephyr agitate the foliage, or bend the fragile reed. High mountains seem to separate this asylum of peace and silence from the rest of the world.

(o) The reader may see these ancient monuments delineated, with great minuteness and accuracy, in the *Voyage Pittoresque de la Grèce* of Monsieur de Choiseul Gouffier.

The sun continues to enlighten this beautiful valley as in the ages of antiquity. Still is it warmed with the creative beams of that glorious luminary, and the prolific earth still produces in abundance vigorous plants, tufted thickets, and herbage maintained in constant verdure by refreshing streams. But the hand of man is wanting to aid the wild efforts of nature. Thorns spring up instead of useful trees, and rushes now cover large tracts of land, which formerly were productive of golden harvests. Were art to bestow ever so little cultivation on these fields, they would soon be adorned with groves of myrtle, oranges and pomegranates, and all the treasures of Ceres and Pomona.

The Greeks, who inhabit this valley, leave it entirely waste; not a cultivated acre is to be found. Dispirited and dejected as they are, what could they undertake? Should they sow, or plant, they would be deemed rich, and the Aga would come to seize on their property. The cultivator bedews the earth with his sweat only to reap the fruits of his labour. Deprive him of that hope, he labours no more; and this is the state of the Greeks under the Ottoman empire.

Such

Such were my reflexions while seated near the ruins of Telmissus, as my eye wandered over the various objects which presented themselves to my view, when the coolness of the evening, and the approaching darkness apprised me that it was time to quit this agreeable retreat. I bade adieu to the stream which had quenched my thirst, to the fig-tree which had refreshed me, and hastened, once more, on board, to join my companions, who feared me lost.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R XII.

To M. L. M.

Rhodes.

FORTUNE, Madam, has persecuted us to the last. We were on the point of entering the harbour of Rhodes, when a violent gale of wind drove the vessel out to sea, and it was with the utmost difficulty we regained the land. At length we have cast anchor in a small bay, a league to the southward of the town (*p*). Immediately after my landing I went to visit M. Potonier, the French consul, who received me very politely, and accommodated me with apartments in his house. From thence, that is, from Neocorio (*q*) I

(*p*) This bay, which seems to have been taken from the coast, is probably the harbour which Demetrius dug during the siege of Rhodes, to shelter his ships from storms, and the attacks of the enemy. It lies to the southward of the town, precisely at the distance assigned by Diodorus Siculus,

(*q*) A village near Rhodes, where the French consul resides.

shall

shall write to you, and give a description of ancient Rhodes, the most eastern and most beautiful of the Cyclades. I shall afterward lay before you a view of its present state, that you may be able to compare what it is with what it was, and form a just idea of the island. Permit me then, Madam, to go back into antiquity, and briefly present to you the principal outline of its history. Those remote periods, in which imitative man engraved images and symbols, to preserve the memory of events, are the reign of fable; but remember that truth is almost always concealed under the veil of allegory.

Several ancient authors assert that Rhodes was formerly covered by the sea, and that it raised its humid head above the waters, and became an island; but they do not fix the time of this event, which is lost in the obscurity of ages; tradition, however, has preserved the memory of the fact, and the gravest writers of antiquity have admitted it as certain. Delos and Rhodes, says Pliny (*r*), those celebrated islands,

(*r*) Pliny, lib. ii. c. 87. This author mentions several other islands in the Mediterranean as having had the same origin. Such as Anaphe and Nea, between Lemnos and

islands, arose out of the sea. So many other authorities attest the same fact, that it cannot reasonably be doubted. Philo (s) attributes this event to the diminution of the waters of the sea; and were this opinion well founded, most of the islands of the Archipelago, being lower than Rhodes, must have had the same origin. But we find nothing like this in history. It is much more natural to imagine that volcanic fires, such as, in the fourth year of the hundred and thirty-fifth olympiad, threw up from the abysses of the ocean Therasia and Thera, the modern Santorin, and which, even in our time, have raised

and the Hellespont, and in the 4th year of the 135th olympiad, Therasia, and Thera, now called Santorin.

Pindar, Oly. Ode vii. Ancient Annals attest, that at the time when Jupiter and the immortals divided the earth, Rhodes had not yet appeared in the midst of the sea, but was still concealed in the profound abysses of the ocean. Aristides in *Rhodiaca*, Ammianus, lib. xvii. say likewise, that Rhodes was formerly covered by the waters of the sea.

(s) Philo, de Mundo. The sea, says this writer, has certainly diminished, as is proved by Rhodes and Delos, for they were formerly covered with the waters of the sea. After many ages, the waters having gradually sunk, these two celebrated islands arose above their surface.

above

above the waters several little islands near them, gave birth, in the remote ages of antiquity, to Rhodes and Delos (r).

The first inhabitants of the island were the Telchines, called in fable Children of the Sea (u). Strabo (x) says they came from Crete, and that they were believed to be magicians, on account of their extensive knowledge. They were the first who taught the use of iron and brass, and made a scythe for Saturn.

Helius, or the sun, enamoured with a nymph called Rhodes, gave the name of his mistress to this island (y). His children, named Heliades, succeeded

(r) Strabo, lib. i. An island having suddenly arisen between Thera and Therasia, the Rhodians, who then possessed the empire of the sea, had the courage to approach it with their ships, and erected on it a temple to Jupiter Asphalius.

(u) Diodorus Siculus, lib. v.

(x) Strabo, lib. xiv.

(y) This allegory, says Diodorus, signifies, that the island being wet and marshy, the heat of the sun evaporated the waters, and rendered the soil extremely fertile. This seems to corroborate also the opinion of the ancients on the origin of this island. For, since Rhodes arose out of the water,

the

succeeded to the Telchines. Versed in astronomy, they divided the year into seasons, and invented the science of navigation. One of them, named Cercaphus, having married Cydippe, had by her three sons, Lindus, Jalisus, and Camirus. At the death of their father, they divided the empire, and each of them built a city bearing his own name (z).

(a) About this time, Danaus flying from Egypt with his daughters, arrived at Lindus. Being favourably received by the inhabitants, he there built a temple to Minerva, in which he consecrated the statue of that goddess. Three of his daughters died in the island, and the rest followed him to Argos.

(b) After the departure of Danaus, Cadmus, the son of Agenor, seeking Europa, by order

the earth must for a long time have been wet and marshy. The beneficent luminary, which dried and rendered it fertile, received the adoration of the inhabitants.

(z) Strabo, lib. xiv. Diodorus Siculus, lib. v. Others say these cities were built by Tlepolemus, son of Hercules, who gave them the names of the three daughters of Danaus, who died in the island. Others again, that they were founded by Althemenus, the grandson of Hercules.

(a) Diodorus Siculus, lib. v.

(b) Ibid.

of

of his father, met with a violent tempest, during which he vowed, if he escaped death, to build a temple to Neptune. Having landed at Lindus, he performed his vow, and left priests to officiate in the temple. He made an offering to the Lindian Minerva of a golden bason with an inscription in Phœnician characters. Athenæus represents his landing here as a military expedition; he says, that Cadmus took possession of part of the island, expelled the Heliades, and settled the Phœnicians there in their stead.

(c) At length the island was over-run with serpents, and thence received the name of *Ophiusa*. Some of these were of a monstrous size, and devoured many of the inhabitants. The oracle of Delos being consulted, declared they must send for Phorbas, then in Thessaly at the head of a body of troops. He accepted the invitation of the Rhodians, destroyed the monsters that ravaged the island, and settled there. After his death, heroic honours were decreed him for his important services. Conon asserts that he drove the Phœnicians from Rhodes.

(c) Diodorus Siculus, lib. v.

A short

(*d*) A short time before the Trojan war, Tlepolemus, son of Hercules, landed with his companions in the isle of Rhodes. Meeting with a favourable reception, he settled there, and, becoming king of the island, divided the lands among the inhabitants, and instituted equitable laws. On his departure for the Trojan war, he left the government to Butes, one of his companions; he greatly distinguished himself at that memorable siege, and died in Troas.

The Rhodians, even in those early ages, had a considerable navy. The island furnished them with timber for ship building, and their situation invited them to partake of the advantages of commerce (*e*). They made voyages into Spain, founded Parthenope, now called Naples, in Campania, and after the siege of Troy built Majorca and Minorca. The island was divided between the inhabitants of Lindus, Jalyfus, and Camirus (*f*).

(*d*) Diodorus Siculus, lib. v.

(*e*) Strabo, lib. xiv.

(*f*) Homer names these towns in one line,

“ Λίνδον Ιηλυσσόν τε καὶ ἀργινοῖνα Κάμειρον.”—Il. ii.

“ Lindus, Jalyfus, and Camirus, white.—POPE.

This

This is what Homer gives us to understand, when he says, speaking of the Rhodians, "They have three cities, three tribes; Jupiter, who governs the immortals, and loves mankind, has heaped on them abundant wealth."

I have passed rapidly over several ages, and omitting a number of mythological stories, hasten to the period when the Rhodians, united by a common interest, formed only one national body, and founded the city of Rhodes, so called from the name of the island. This important event took place during the Peloponnesian war (g). "It is known to almost all of you," says Aristides, "that before the naval expedition of Lysander, the Lacedemonian, the city you now inhabit was not built. The island was called Rhodes, but the city of that name did not exist. The Rhodians dwelt in the three towns mentioned by Homer."

(b) Rhodes had for its architect, Hippodamus, of Miletus, who built the superb walls

(g) Aristides, in Rhodiaca.

(b) The present city of Rhodes was built during the Peloponnesian war, by the architect who built the walls of the Piræus. Strabo, lib. xiv.

of

of the Piræus, destroyed soon after by the Lacedemonians (*i*).

The people of Lindus, Jalyfus, and Camirus, united in one republic, were now all collected within this city, which was about three leagues in circumference (*k*), and capable of containing a prodigious number of inhabitants. It was situated at the point of a promontory, that stretches toward the east, on the same spot where the modern town stands. The ground having a declivity, the architect adapted his plan to the situation, and laid out the streets so artificially, as to convert this defect into a beauty. (*l*) "Rhodes," says Diodorus, "resembled an amphitheatre; its numerous vessels, its towers, and soldiers, gave a high idea of its wealth and power." Strabo, who had travelled through several countries, and had seen Rome, Alexandria, Memphis, and the most celebrated

(*i*) Lindus, Jalyfus, and Camirus, were at first separate republics, but the inhabitants afterwards united under one government in Rhodes. Ibid.

(*k*) According to Strabo, it was eighty stadia, or about three leagues in circumference.

(*l*) Diodorus Siculus, lib. xx.

cities

cities of Asia, prefers Rhodes to any of them. (m) "The beauty," says he, "of its harbours, streets, and walls, and the magnificence of its monuments, render it so much superior to all other cities, as to admit of no comparison."

Aristides (n) has described it more circumstantially, and the account he has left us of it is calculated to excite our astonishment and admiration. "Within the walls of Rhodes, we never saw a small house by the side of a large one. All were of the same height, and the same order of architecture, so that the whole city seemed but one single edifice. Wide streets crossed it from side to side, and these were so well disposed, that from whatever part it was viewed the prospect was truly magnificent. The walls and towers, of a wonderful extent, height, and beauty, above all excited our wonder. The lofty summits of the latter served as a Pharos to mariners. Such, indeed, was the magnificence of Rhodes, that, without having seen it, the imagination cannot possibly

(m) Strabo, lib. xiv.

(n) Aristides, in Rhodiaca.

“form any conception of its grandeur. All
 “the parts of this immense town, mutually
 “connected with each other, and most beau-
 “tifully proportioned, formed a perfect whole,
 “of which the walls were the defence and
 “ornament. Rhodes was the only city of
 “which it might be said, it was fortified like
 “a place of war, and decorated like a
 “palace.”

To this description we must add, superb temples, whose porticos were enriched with paintings of the first masters, a multitude of Colossuses, and statues of astonishing workmanship, a magnificent theatre, extensive arsenals, and fleets arriving from every part of the world to pay the tribute due to the arts from wealth: We must likewise recollect, it was inhabited by a free, brave, learned, and fortunate people, and we shall be enabled to form some idea of this most beautiful city of the world. I cannot deny myself the pleasure, Madam, of describing to you one or two of those wonders of art which rendered it so celebrated. Pliny, after enumerating the most famous Colossal statues, adds: (o) “But none of these are to

(o) Pliny, lib. xxxiv. c. 7.

“ be compared to that which the Rhodians
 “ dedicated to the sun. This Colossus was
 “ the work of Chares, of Lindus (*p*), a pupil
 “ of Lysippus (*q*). It was seventy cubits high
 “ (about one hundred and five feet), (*r*) and
 “ was thrown down by an earthquake fifty-six
 “ years after it was first erected (*s*). In this
 “ state, its appearance is still astonishing.
 “ Few men are able to embrace its thumb;
 “ and its fingers are larger than entire statues
 “ usually are; where it has been broken,
 “ we may discover, within, deep cavities
 “ filled with enormous stones, which the
 “ artist had introduced to render it firm on
 “ its base. It is said to have been the labour
 “ of twelve years, and that it cost three

(*p*) One of the towns of the isle of Rhodes.

(*q*) This Lysippus, a celebrated statuary, had cast a Colossus, forty cubits high, at Tarentum.

(*r*) Simonides, in the Anthologia, makes it eighty cubits; but Strabo, lib. xiv. Isidore Orig. lib. xiv. cap. 6. and Fessus, all agree with Pliny, and say its height was only seventy cubits.

(*s*) Polybius, lib. v. Orosius, lib. iv. Paulus Diaconus Hist. Misc. all agree in saying, that at this time the island of Rhodes, and the country of Caria, were agitated by a violent earthquake, that caused great devastation, and threw down the famous Colossus.

“ hundred

" hundred talents, a sum which the Rho-
 " dians had gained by the sale of the warlike
 " machines left by Demetrius before their
 " walls, when he raised the siege. This city
 " contains a hundred other Colossal statues,
 " less, indeed, than this, but each of them
 " superb enough to render illustrious any
 " place where they might be erected. To
 " these are to be added, five gigantic statues
 " of the gods, the invaluable works of Bry-
 " axis."

(t) Some modern historians, wishing to
 add something of the marvellous to the ac-
 count of the Colossus, have pretended the
 feet rested on two rocks, at the entrance of the
 harbour, and that vessels passed, with all their
 sails set, between its legs. This fable deserves
 no regard, since it is contradicted by the
 silence of antiquity, which certainly would
 not have neglected to record so remarkable
 a fact. On the contrary, the historians who
 mention the fall of the Colossus, as well as
 those who saw it, testify, that it was lying on
 the ground (u); but had it been placed at
 the

(t) Rollin. *Histoire Ancienne*.

(u) Strabo, lib. xiv. The Colossus of Rhodes, over-
thrown

the entrance of the harbour, it must have fallen into the sea, which circumstance they certainly would not have omitted (x). It was still in its fallen state in the days of Pliny; as it likewise was as late as the twelfth year of the emperor Constans, when Moawiah, general of the Caliph Othman, taking Rhodes, destroyed this statue, which had well deserved to be enumerated among the seven wonders of the world (y). He sold it to a Jew, who conveyed its fragments to Emesa, on nine hundred camels (z), nine hundred and thirty-two years after it was first erected.

The arts seemed to vie with each other, to contribute to the embellishment of Rhodes. Painting there disputed the palm with sculp-

thrown by a violent earthquake, and at present lying on the ground, has its knees broken. The Rhodians are forbidden, by an oracle, from raising it up. This Colossal statue, the most beautiful ever consecrated to the Gods by man, is placed among the seven wonders of the world.

(x) Paulus Diaconus, Hist. Misc.

(y) Constantine Porphyrogenetus says, it was sold to a Jew of Edessa, and increases prodigiously the number of camels, which carried off its fragments, making them amount to thirty thousand.

(z) Murtius, Dissertation on the Isle of Rhodes.

ture. The temples contained a multitude of admirable works, among which, says Strabo (a),
 “two pictures of Protogenes were particularly admired, the one representing Ialyfus, and the other a Satyr, standing upon a column, with a partridge at his feet. The latter picture being exposed to public view, the bird attracted universal admiration, so that the Satyr, in the finishing of which the artist had employed his utmost attention and abilities, was almost entirely disregarded. The wonder and applause of the spectators was still more increased, when, on bringing tame partridges before the picture, they began to call, as soon as they perceived the painted bird, to the great delight of the multitude (b). Protogenes was so mortified at the preference given to what was intended merely as an ornament, that he requested permission from the prefect of the temple to efface the partridge, and actually did efface it.”

(a) Strabo, lib. xiv.

(b) Protogenes was of Canna, a city of Caria, subject to the Rhodians.

Pliny (c) thus describes the picture of Ialysus mentioned by Strabo: "The most beautiful of the works of Protogenes, is the picture of Ialysus, which is still to be seen in the temple of Peace at Rome. To secure it, if possible, against the injuries of time, the painter placed four layers of colours one over the other, hoping that if the upper ones should decay, the lower would still remain. In this picture we see a dog, exquisitely painted; chance having conspired with art to render it perfect. The painter, after finishing every part of the animal, and having surmounted every difficulty, was so far satisfied with his work; but one thing still remained, which he despaired of being able perfectly to express; this was the froth which whitens the mouth of a dog when panting; to represent this defied his utmost art, and in every attempt he only seemed to depart further from nature. The foam appeared always painted, and never natural. He was the more mortified, as he was never satisfied with any thing less than what

(c) Pliny, lib. xxxv. c. 10.

“ might be mistaken for nature itself. Of-
 “ ten did he efface his colours, and as often
 “ change his brushes, without success. Ir-
 “ ritated at the impotence of his art, he pee-
 “ vishly threw his sponge against the picture,
 “ which by accident struck the mouth of
 “ the dog, and disposed the colours more
 “ happily than his utmost endeavours and
 “ skill had been able to effect; chance for
 “ once most accurately imitating na-
 “ ture (d).”

I have been so particular in the description of these two pieces, to prove how much the ancients excelled in the art of painting. Protogenes, and Apelles his cotemporary, imitated nature so perfectly, that their pictures seemed living and animated beings. The resemblance was so exact, that animals, nay even men, were not unfrequently deceived. Let it not be imagined that the artist, born with the happiest talents, can ever attain this de-

(d) Caius Cassius, who took Rhodes, and carried off all the offerings, except the chariot of the sun, brought away this fine picture. Dion Cassius. It was preserved till the time of Commodus, under whose reign the temple of Peace was burnt, that is to say, in the year 450. Herodian. lib. i.

gree of perfection, without prodigious efforts. Genius must be seconded by the most persevering labour, and a profound knowledge of every science allied to his art. Without this, the painter creates nothing for immortality. Protogenes (*e*) was seven years in finishing the picture of Ialysus; and, if Pliny may be credited (*f*), during the whole time, lived entirely on lupins, lest, by too much indulging his appetite, he should obstruct the activity of his mind. Nothing can give a stronger proof of the sublime idea entertained of perfection by the ancient artists, or more clearly shew how much they were inflamed with a noble thirst of fame, than the readiness with which they made such sacrifices,

(*e*) Plutarch in Demetrio. Protogenes painted for the Rhodians the picture of Ialysus, which was carried off by Demetrius from a house in the suburbs, while yet unfinished. The Rhodians sent a herald to him, to conjure him to spare this piece. The prince replied, that he would sooner burn the images of his father than such a production of so wonderful an art. It is said that the painter was employed on it seven years.

(*f*) Pliny lib. xxxv. c. 10.

Do not imagine, Madam, that Rhodes contained only a small number of excellent paintings. The porticos of its temples were decorated with pictures of infinite value. The possession of one only of these immortal works, says Aristides (*g*), would have sufficed to render a town illustrious. Lucian (*b*), who was no flatterer, has these words, when speaking of his residing at Rhodes: "I lodged in the quarter of the temple of Bacchus, and, in my leisure hours, frequently rambled through the city to entertain myself with the admirable works of art with which it is enriched. Nothing can surpass the exquisite pleasure I have experienced, from time to time, while walking under the porticos of the temple, and contemplating the admirable paintings which adorn that noble edifice. My satisfaction was the greater, as I was well acquainted with the subjects, and recalled to memory the poetical stories of the Gods and Heroes that are there so admirably represented."

(*g*) Aristides, in *Rhodiaca*.

(*b*) Lucian, in *Amoribus*.

The sciences and literature ever go hand in hand with the fine arts, of which they are the instructors and the guides. For the cultivation of these also were the Rhodians distinguished. Their schools attained so high a degree of celebrity, that they were resorted to by some of the greatest men of Rome; among whom were Cato (*i*), Marcus Brutus (*k*), Cicero (*l*), Cassius (*m*), Cæsar (*n*), and Pompey (*o*).

These men, born to command, did not confine themselves to a few frivolous acquisitions; they all learnt Greek, then the universal language, and studied with attention the principles of legislation, and the laws of various nations. Above all, they endeavoured to per-

(*i*) Aurelius Victor, Vit. Viror. Illustr.

(*k*) Cicero, in Bruto.

(*l*) Appian, de Bello Civili, lib. iv.

(*m*) Cassius made a voyage to Rhodes, where he was instructed in the fine arts, and the beauties and niceties of the Greek language.

(*n*) Plutarch, in Vita Cæsar's: He sailed for Rhodes, there to study eloquence under Apollonius Milo, whose disciple Cicero had been.

(*o*) Plutarch, in Vita Pompeii: He repaired to Rhodes, and studied eloquence there, under the Sophists, paying to each a talent.

fect themselves under the Greek rhetoricians in the art of public speaking. Destined as they were to discourse before an enlightened people, concerning the most important interests of the whole world, eloquence was necessary to govern the minds of men, and enforce persuasion by lively images, or cogent reasoning. Oratory was, at that time, as indispensable to a Roman as courage or military abilities.

To what must we attribute this flourishing state of the Rhodian republic? To the fertility of the soil, the beauty of the climate, or the excellent situation of the island? These advantages, no doubt, contributed to, but were not the efficient cause of, the wealth of the Rhodians, which was owing to the goodness of their laws, and the wisdom of their government, the only solid foundations of the glory of empires. "We cannot
 "too much admire," says Strabo (*p*), "the
 "care with which the Rhodians preserve
 "their excellent code of laws (*q*), and the
 "wisdom

(*p*) Strabo, lib. xiv.

(*q*) The Roman Emperors adopted the naval code of the Rhodians. Volusius Maximus, *de Lege Rhodiaca*
 has

“ wisdom conspicuous in the whole consti-
 “ tution of their republic, and especially, in
 “ the management of their navy. This has
 “ long preserved them the empire of the
 “ sea, which they have freed from pirates,
 “ and secured to them the friendship of the
 “ Romans.” In alliance with numerous
 other powers, they artfully accommodated
 themselves to their various interests, without
 taking part in their private quarrels. This
 sage policy procured them a long peace, and
 rendered their commerce so flourishing, that
 it extended over the whole Mediterranean.
 Rhodes was the emporium of every trading
 nation. “ The mariner who touched there,”
 says Aristides (*r*), “ beheld, with astonish-
 “ ment, several harbours, formed by art,
 “ of piers of stone, which advanced far

has preserved us the following declaration of the Emperor
 Antoninus; “ I, the master of the world: Let every thing
 “ relative to naval affairs be determined by the maritime
 “ code of the Rhodians, as often as that shall not directly
 “ contradict our laws.”

M. Pastoret, in an excellent dissertation, which obtained
 the prize, of the academy of inscriptions, has demonstrated
 the influence of these laws on the marine of the Romans,

(*r*) Aristides, in Rhodiaca.

“ into

“ into the sea. One of these received the
“ vessels from Ionia; another, those from
“ Caria. Here a mole offered shelter to the
“ fleets of Egypt, Cyprus and Phœnicia, as if
“ expressly formed for each respective city.
“ Near to these ports, arsenals reared their
“ lofty heads, and astonished the beholder
“ with their magnificence.”

The forests of Mount Atabyris (*s*), which were carefully preserved, furnished the Rhodians with excellent ship timber. Their vessels were the best sailers in the world, and their mariners the most expert in navigation. This gave occasion to the following apostrophe from Aristides (*t*); “ Oh, ye Rhodians! if ever the tempest warns you to
“ think of your safety; if ever you have to
“ struggle against the fury of the waves, recollect the expression of one of your mariners, when his vessel was labouring in
“ a storm: He saw the abyss opening to
“ receive him; when raising his voice, he
“ exclaimed, Oh, Neptune! know that I

(*s*) Atabyris, the highest mountain in the isle of Rhodes, produces excellent pine trees.

(*t*) Aristides, in Rhodiaca.

“ will

“ will not abandon the helm, and that if I
“ must be swallowed up, I will steer my ship
“ to the very depth of thy empire !” Such,
Madam, were the sources of the power and
glory of the Rhodians. Alexander (u), who
regarded their city as the first in the universe,
chose there to deposit his last will.

The Rhodians were worthy to inhabit this
city. Their morals were mild and amiable,
and their manners polished, without affecta-
tion (v). When they appeared in public, they
were remarkable for the gravity of their de-
portment. They were not seen loitering in
the streets ; but seriously reprov'd foreigners
whom they saw strolling about in inconfide-
rate idleness. At the theatre, when a piece
deserv'd applause, all the spectators kept a
profound silence. This they deemed the best
homage they could pay to merit. At their
tables, civility and urbanity presid'd ; and
all excess was banish'd. They convers'd
in a free and friendly manner with their
guests, and never mortified them, by assuming
the superiority of a master. “ These are the

(u) Diodorus Siculus, lib. xx.

(v) Dion. Chrysostom, Orat. 32.

“ virtues,”

“virtues,” says Aristides (*w*), “which render
 “your city so renowned. These raise you
 “above every other nation, and attract the love
 “and admiration of every people. Your an-
 “cient, and truly Grecian manners, render
 “you far more illustrious than your ports,
 “your walls, or your arsenals!”

Such a people could not but be humane. As for myself, I doubt whether men possess a right to put other men to death, even when guilty of great crimes. The Rhodians, however, it is certain, spared their fellow-citizens the horror of those bloody tragedies, which dishonour our cities. Far from preparing scaffolds in public places; far from hiring despicable mercenaries to publish in the streets sentences which condemn unhappy wretches to the flames, or the wheel; the law prohibited any executioner from entering Rhodes (*x*). Even the sentence of death was pronounced without the gates of the city (*y*). And they would have considered it as an impiety, to stain their streets with human blood.

(*w*) Aristides, in Rhodiaca.

(*x*) Dion. Chrysostom.

(*y*) Aristides, in Rhodiaca.

The ancient writers, nevertheless, reproach the Rhodians with the vices inseparable from great wealth : luxury, and voluptuousness. " They build," says Stratonicus, " as if they " were immortal, and serve their tables with " as much profusion, as if they had but a " few days to live." The vessels they made use of in their repasts, were of an exquisite invention (z), and greatly renowned for the pleasure they gave in drinking. In their composition they employed myrrh, the flower of an odoriferous reed, saffron, balm, amoma, and cinnamon, baked together. Anacreon, reciting the number of his mistresses, says, " For Rhodes, write down two thousand." And we find, the ancients called it the city of gallantry (a).

The government of Rhodes was always republican. At first, the supreme authority was lodged with the people. The nobles, afterwards, got possession of it ; and formed an aristocracy (b). But they did not abuse their power. Humanity led them to succour their

(z) Athenæus, lib. vii.

(a) Athenæus, lib. viii.

(b) Aristot. Politic. lib. v.

fellow-citizens ; and true policy taught them, that the lower classes of society are of the most real importance ; because, without them, a state cannot even subsist. They took care, therefore, to prevent the wretchedness which is so destructive to population (c), and created magistrates, whose sole employment it was, to prevent or relieve, the necessities of the poor ; to provide them with wholesome food, and employ them in the public works. This excellent regulation secured tranquillity to the republic, which never experienced those violent and repeated convulsions, that, at length, overthrew those of Athens and Rome. It, indeed, suffered from some transient storms. Alcibiades, at the head of a numerous fleet, rendered them subject to the Athenians ; but the republic, entering into an alliance with the inhabitants of Byzantium and Chio, shook off that yoke (d). Mausoleus made himself master of Rhodes, by stratagem, and established a tyranny. Artemisia, his queen, making use of a like artifice, cut off some of the principal

(c) Strabo, lib. xiv.

(d) Libanius, de Rhodiorum Libertate

inhabitants. But the Rhodians expelled their tyrants, and recovered their liberty.

The Rhodians were peaceably enjoying the fruits of the wisdom of their government, when Antigonus (*e*), irritated at not having been able to detach them from the alliance of Ptolemy, king of Egypt, declared war against them. He made immense preparations, and sent his son, Demetrius, to subdue the island. That prince, excellently skilled in the art of taking towns, besieged Rhodes by sea and land. To reduce it, he invented new machines. He advanced, to the foot of the walls, a moving citadel of wood plated with iron. This edifice, called the Helepolis, was of a prodigious size; had nine stories, and might be moved every way. Catapultas were employed against the walls, which threw prodigious stones and beams of an immense size, headed with iron, while battering-rams, two hundred feet in length, and worked by a thousand men at once, were shaking them with repeated strokes. A multitude of archers, placed on the top of the moving tower, showered down their ar-

(*e*) Diodorus Siculus, lib. xx. describes this siege at length.

rows on the besieged. Thirty thousand soldiers were employed to put the helepolis in motion; and fight under its shelter. The strongest tower of Rhodes, and great part of the wall, were thrown down; but the courage of a free people triumphed over the fleets of Demetrius, the numerous army he had in his pay, and all the military talents this great captain displayed, during a whole year, in his various attacks. At the moment when the besieged were most briskly pressed, some of the senators proposed to throw down the statues erected in honour of Antigonus and Demetrius, in happier times: but the people rejected this mean counsel, and treated it as criminal. The generosity of the Rhodians, toward their enemy, did them honour in the eyes of all Greece; and history has preserved, and long will preserve, the memory of so glorious an action (*f*).

(*f*) Ptolemy rendered them great services during this war, by sending them troops, and ships, laden with corn. They, in gratitude, sent to consult the oracle of Ammon; and, on its answer, consecrated, within their walls, a magnificent monument; to which they gave the name of Ptolemy: It was a large square, with a portico on each side, a stadium (six hundred feet) in length. Diodorus Siculus, lib. xx.

Mithri-

Mithridates (*g*), who so long withstood the fortune of the Romans, and conquered Greece, and the islands of the Archipelago, failed in his attempts on Rhodes (*b*). Caius Cassius took it, during the civil war, and despoiled it of a part of its treasures. Nevertheless, the republic again gloriously reared her head, and the services rendered the Romans by the Rhodians, procured them both their liberty and new towns in Caria. In fine, ever observant of their laws, and careful to maintain the commerce to which they owed their power, they remained independent till the reign of Vespasian (*i*), who first reduced their island to a Roman province. Since that time, Rhodes has been only one of the finest isles of the Archipelago. The power and riches of the inhabitants have disappeared. It seems as if their genius became extinct with their liberty, that sacred fire, which had caused them to produce so many wonders. Literature, the sciences,

(*g*) Aurelius Victor, de Viris Illustribus.

(*b*) Diodorus Siculus, l. xx.

(*i*) Suetonius, in Vita Vespasian. cap. 8.

and arts, lost with their freedom, have never more revived.

Under Constantine this island remained a part of the Eastern empire, which was greatly weakened by its division. The pusillanimity and vices of the princes who succeeded, shook it to its very foundation. The Arabs, led on by the enthusiasm which Mahomet had inspired, invading and giving battle in the name of the Almighty, conquered the finest provinces of the empire; and in the twelfth year of the reign of Constant (k), Mowiah, Othman's lieutenant, made himself master of Rhodes. The Greek emperors, however, at length expelled the infidels, and kept possession till the time of Baldwin; who, becoming sovereign of Constantinople, sent a prefect to Rhodes (l). Some time after, John Ducas conquered it. The brave warriors, then known by the name of the Knights of St. John, led on by their grand master, Foulques de Villaret, attacked and took it, after a bloody battle, in which heroism triumphed over numbers and va-

(k) Zonaras, Annal. 3.

(l) Nicephorus Gregorias, lib. ii.

lour (*m*). Mahomet the second, who made the Christian world tremble, and seemed to have enchained victory to his car, tarnished the lustre of his laurels, by besieging this place, defended by a handful of heroes. In 1552, Soliman saw a numerous army perish under its walls; and if this redoubtable conqueror of Hungary and Persia did at length subdue Rhodes, attacked, as it was, on all sides by the forces of the Turks, the greater was the shame for the Christian princes, who did not send a single vessel to the aid of its intrepid defenders. Destroyed, rather than vanquished, they were almost all buried under the ruins of their forts. Soliman could not enter the town, but through torrents of the blood of his soldiers. He found it nothing but heaps of ruins, defended by a small number of knights, covered with wounds, at the head of whom appeared the famous Villiers de l'Isle Adam, a brave old man, who united to the coolness of age, the intrepidity of a hero, and the greatness of soul of a philosopher.

I have, now, given you a summary of the history of Rhodes, from the earliest anti-

(*m*) Paulus Langius, in Chronico Citizenfi.

quity, to the period in which it fell under the power of the Turks: it now remains for me to lay before you some account of its present state.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET.

L E T T E R XIII.

To M. L. M.

Rhodes.

I HAVE no longer, Madam, the pleasure of presenting you the description of a magnificent city, a wise government, or a free and glorious nation. The ambition of the Romans, the degeneracy of the monarchs of the Lower Empire, the fanaticism of the Arabs, and destructive earthquakes, have alternately laid waste the isle of Rhodes. The despotism of the Turks, succeeding to these calamities, has been the cause of no less fatal evils; and utterly destroyed monuments, sciences, and arts.

The modern town, built on the ruins of the ancient city, occupies only a quarter of its extent, and possesses no remarkable antiquities. Not even the smallest remains of the theatre, temples, and portico, are to be discovered. Statues, colossuses, paintings, all have been destroyed, or carried off. To wide
and

and skilfully disposed streets; to those regularly ranged edifices, where each front presented the same order of architecture, have succeeded narrow and winding lanes, and houses without taste, regularity, or decoration. I may venture to assert, Madam, that if a Rhodian of the days of Alexander were to revisit his native city, he would find himself absolutely a stranger; he would not recollect the smallest monument; but must imagine himself transported into a country inhabited by barbarians.

The knights of Rhodes have left various traces of their residence in the island. Their armorial ensigns, and some busts of the grand masters, sculptured in relief, on marble, decorate the front of several buildings. The walls and towers they erected still subsist, and bear the glorious marks of their obstinate defence. The church of St. John has been converted into a mosque. The vast hospital, in which Christian charity received the faithful from all parts of the world, and furnished them with succours, at this day serves as a granary for the Turks. The barbarians suffer it to go to ruin, as well as the government

government house, in which we find antique marbles, and columns.

Rhodes has only two harbours. The smallest faces the east, and is called Darca. Rocks, at a small distance from each other, in the front, block the entrance, and only leave room for one vessel to pass. Moles, raised on each side, defend it from every wind. The Turks, who, since the conquest of the island, have not removed from it a single grain of sand, suffer it gradually to choak up. There is only water enough for merchant ships, and even they are obliged to unload a part of their cargo, before they can enter it. Ships go thither to careen, and caravelles are built there for the Grand Signior. This handsome basin might be made fit for the reception of large vessels, if the same means were employed to clear it, as at Marseilles and other ports.

The other harbour is large; it bears the name of Rhodes; and in this, frigates of thirty guns may anchor. Vessels are here defended from the westerly winds, which, in these latitudes, prevail nine months in the year. North and north-easterly winds blow full into the harbour; and, when violent, ships
are

are in danger of driving on the rocks, or against the walls of the town. Though Rhodes has retained none of its ancient splendor, its advantageous situation, on the point of a promontory, its houses disposed in the form of an amphitheatre, the solid structure of its walls, and its towers advanced upon the shoals, give it an air of strength and importance to mariners, as they approach the city (*n*). But there are no soldiers on the island. Its forts are without defenders, and will become the conquest of the first nation, which shall think proper to attack them.

The Pacha is the governor general of the island. He possesses absolute power; and presides at once over civil justice and military discipline. He nominates to employments that fall vacant; sentences to death, and is to watch over the maintenance of good order,

(*n*) The Rhodians have no troops in their island. They are not warriors. Knowing themselves incapable of resisting the weakest enemy who may attack them, in time of war they hire soldiers from Caramania, to defend their city. These are undisciplined troops, who abandon themselves to all the excesses of a blind ferocity, and are more to be dreaded by the inhabitants, than by the enemy.

through

through the whole extent of his government. This supreme officer, finding no one who dare resist his will, may be guilty of the utmost excesses of tyranny, without fear of punishment or controul.

All private litigations are decided before the tribunal of the judge, called the Cadi. His decisions are without appeal. He partakes also of the ecclesiastical jurisdiction with the Muphti. The latter is the interpreter of the Koran, presides over religious affairs, and expounds the divine law; nor can the Pacha put a man to death, until he has given his sanction to the justice of the sentence.

The Greeks and Jews have a chief named the Mouteveli, who is their intendant general; and has the regulation of the tax called Carach (o) (a capitation tax, imposed by the Grand Signior on all his subjects who are not Mahometans, but which is paid only by the men). He decides all differences that arise among them, without its being necessary to have recourse to any other jurisdiction. When the Cadi has condemned a Greek or Jewish debtor to pay the money due to his creditor,

(o) This word is Arabic, and signifies tribute, or tax.

he

he sends his sentence to the Mouteveli, who, if he thinks proper, carries it into execution. These are the principal officers in the island, who all seem to conspire its ruin. As a proof of this, I shall give you a slight sketch of their administration; for the truth of which I can safely vouch.

The soil of Rhodes is dry and sandy; but the numerous springs which water it render it extremely fertile. Corn thrives there admirably. Its yellow and heavy grain affords a flour as white as snow, which makes excellent bread. If half of the country, capable of growing it, were cultivated, the Rhodians would have far more than sufficient for their consumption, and might export to foreign countries. But the Turks are no cultivators; and the Greeks, weighed down by the services exacted from them by the Mouteveli, for his own profit; and discouraged by the fear of not enjoying the fruits of their labours, let the finest fields lie barren. It is certain, Madam, that a single word from the Pacha would enrich the country with the treasures of agriculture. He is absolute, and has but to command, and assure the husbandman of his protection: but he knows not
whether

whether he shall himself be in place to-morrow, and would be fearful of labouring for the advantage of his successor. Besides, a still more powerful reason prevents him from endeavouring any improvement: the misery of the country constitutes his wealth. Rhodes not furnishing sufficient corn for the support of its inhabitants, he sends to purchase the grain of Caramania, which is of an inferior quality, at a low rate. He has this conveyed to market in small quantities, to enhance the price. But, what is still more oppressive, is that the rate fixed for the first bushel of the new crop, serves as the standard price for all that is sold during the remainder of the year; which rule is not to be departed from, though one half of the people should perish. This infamous monopoly, which rapidly enriches those who are concerned in it, is productive of the most fatal consequences to commerce, agriculture, and the industry of the inhabitants. What, indeed, can be expected from a nation, in want of the first necessities of life? What exchanges can they make with foreign countries, if their own be insufficient for their support, and they have neither arts nor manufactures? and, indeed, the universal

ful poverty and frightful depopulation of the island, are indelible proofs of the vices of this wretched government. The following statement will be a sufficient demonstration of what I have said.

The island of Rhodes contains two cities; the capital, of the same name, of which I have been speaking, and the ancient Lindus. The former is inhabited by Turks, and a small number of Jews,

Five villages inhabited by Mahometans, and

Five towns and forty one villages inhabited by Greeks.

Number of families.

Turks	-	4700
Greeks	-	2500
Jews	-	100
		<hr/>
Total		7300

Supposing five persons to a family, we shall have 36,500 inhabitants. But the island is more than forty leagues in circumference. Here then is a vast space occupied by fewer people than is contained in a moderate town

town in France. Might we not say that at Rhodes the earth devours its inhabitants? By no means; the soil is fruitful, and would produce abundantly, now, as well as formerly, corn, oil, excellent wines, wax, and even wood for ship-building. Despotism, and the monopolies of the great, alone prevent the increase of the inhabitants. The state of the revenues of the island perfectly corresponds with the small number and poverty of the Rhodians. Permit me, Madam, to lay it before you; without these particulars, what I relate would appear incredible.

Table

Table of the revenues of the island of Rhodes.

Duties of carach or capitation	42500	} Piaftres, or crowns of 3 livres—half a crown English.
Tenths on all produce of the land	23050	
Customs	3500	
Tax on houfes	6250	
On the farm of wax	10300	
On cattle	800	
At the gates	200	
On the farm of the baths	1200	
On falt	700	
On vineyards	600	
New poll tax on every Greek and Jew	900	
Total	90,000	

Here then we have 90,000
Turkish piaftres which the island
produces the Grand Signior,
from which we must deduct

55,500 Piaftres

Employed in paying the guards
of the town and villages, the
inspectors of estates in the coun-
try, the repairs of the mosques,
and the bread and soap distri-
buted to the poor, by order of
the Sultan. So that the Grand
Signior really receives no more
than

34,500 Piaftres

From

From this calculation, Madam, on the accuracy of which you may rely, it appears that this large island produces less to the Ottoman emperors, than many estates, of only some leagues extent, in France, are worth to their possessors. Do not ask me what has become of that powerful people, who, profiting by their advantageous situation, their forests, their harbours, and the fertility of their country, covered the Mediterranean with their victorious fleets: I have already said they lost their liberty; and with it science and national genius. The Turkish government has put the finishing hand to their misfortunes; Rhodes now only affords a few indigent wretches, without commerce, arts, or industry, because they can have no property, who wander over the desolated plains of this once flourishing island.

Of the three cities founded, according to the fable, by the children of the sun, Lindus alone has left any remarkable vestiges. Camirus and Jalifus are totally destroyed (*p*).
 “ Leaving Rhodes, says Strabo, and sailing
 “ on with the coast on the right, the first

(*p*) Strabo, lib. xiv.

“ city

“ city we arrive at is Lindus, situated on a
“ hill on the south side of the island, and
“ opposite Alexandria. The traveller here
“ admires the famous temple of the Lindian
“ Minerva, built by the daughters of Danaus (*q*).” Cadmus enriched it with magnificent offerings. The inhabitants here consecrated the seventh ode of Pindar’s *Olympics*, which they inscribed in letters of gold (*r*). The ruins of this noble edifice are still visible on an eminence near the sea. The remains of its walls, which were built with enormous stones, discover the Egyptian taste; but the columns and other ornaments have been carried off. On the highest part of the rock, we perceive the ruins of a castle that served as a fortress to the town; it occupied a large space which is now filled with rubbish.

The modern Lindus is situated at the foot of this hill; a deep bay, which runs up far into the land, serves it as a harbour. Vessels find here good anchorage, in eight and twelve fathom water, and are sheltered

(*q*) Diodorus Siculus, lib. v. says it was built by Danaus himself.

(*r*) Demetrius Triclinius.

from the south-westerly winds, which prevail during the rough season of the year. At the beginning of winter, they should anchor close to a little village called Massary. Before the building of Rhodes, Lindus was the port resorted to by the fleets of Egypt, and of Tyre. It was enriched by commerce, and a wise government, profiting by its harbour and situation, might still render it a flourishing city.

About the middle of Rhodes is a high mountain, which commands the whole island. It is called Artemira, and I imagine it to be the Mount Atabyris of Strabo (s). On it formerly was a temple of Jupiter, now no longer in existence, but its place is supplied by a small chapel, to which the Greeks make pilgrimages. Mount Artemira is very steep, so that it is impossible to ascend it on horseback, and on foot it takes four hours to reach the top. When there we enjoy a most magnificent prospect. On the edge of the horizon, towards the north-east, we discover the summits of Mount Cragus; to the

(s) We next arrive at Atabyris, the highest mountain in the country, on the summit of which is a temple of Jupiter. Strabo, lib. xiv.

north, the high coast of Caramania; to the north-west, the small islands of the Archipelago, which appear like luminous points; to the south-west, the summit of Mount Ida, capped with clouds; and, to the south, and south-east, the vast expanse of waters which bathe the coasts of Africa. This extensive prospect varies every instant, as it is more or less illuminated by the rays of the sun, and exhibits a moving scenery which astonishes and delights the beholder. After contemplating this grand picture, the eye looks down with pleasure on the island which rounds itself beneath our feet; and here and there we perceive, on the tops of the most lofty hills, ancient pines, planted by nature, that in ages past formed thick forests, which the Rhodians carefully preserved for their navy. At present these trees are not very numerous, as the Turks make use of them to build the Grand Signior's caravelles, and cut down without ever planting. Their solitary shades are at present the retreats of the wild asses, which are remarkable for their surprising swiftness.

Beyond these first heights, we meet with various amphitheatres of eminences, which

become gradually lower till we reach the sea. In the greater part of the island, the coast is a gentle and almost insensible declivity; therefore, ships may almost every where anchor at a cable's length from the shore. The hills in general are covered with thorns, or brambles; but on some of them we find vineyards, which still produce the perfumed wine in such request among the ancients (*t*). This wine is very pleasant to the taste, and leaves an exquisite flavour in the mouth. The Rhodians added the luxury of drinking it out of voluptuous cups. It would be easy to multiply these vines, and cover with them hills of a great extent, which are now lying without cultivation.

On the shady summit of Mount Artemira a great number of springs arise, which fertilize the plains and vallies. Around the villages, we find a few cultivated spots, and orchards, where the fig, pomegranate, and orange trees, though planted without regu-

(*t*) Pliny. The wine of Rhodes resembles that of Cos. Theodorus adds, Some praise the wine of Rhodes, on account of its exquisite perfume, and agreeable flavour.

larity or taste, afford, nevertheless, pleasing shades. The peach trees, which, in the time of Pliny (*u*), produced no fruit at Rhodes, are at present very fruitful; but the peaches they bear have neither the flavour, nor the delicious juice of ours; as in this country they know nothing of the art of grafting. The palm flourishes here, as in the days of Theophrastus (*v*), but produces no fruit. There seems to be a certain line drawn by nature for each species of tree, beyond which some will not grow at all, and others become barren.

In passing over the island, we traverse with regret beautiful vallies, without finding so much as a village, a cottage, or even the smallest traces of cultivation. The bottoms of the rocks are covered with wild roses. Myrtles in flower perfume the air with

(*u*) The peach trees were transmitted to us late, and with difficulty. They produce no fruit at Rhodes, which is the first place they were transplanted to from Egypt. Pliny. l. xv. cap. 13.

(*v*) The nature of the soil contributes much to fecundity or sterility. This is visible in the peach and palm trees. The latter bears fruit in Egypt, and the adjacent countries; at Rhodes it only flowers.

their

their delicious emanations, and tufts of the laurel-rose adorn the banks of rivulets with their beautiful flowers. The inhabitants suffer the earth to nourish an infinity of useless plants, without endeavouring to direct or profit by its fecundity.

But let us not too heavily censure the Greeks for this torpid indolence. They are utterly unable to attempt any thing for private advantage, or public utility. The destructive monopoly of the Pacha prevents all exertion, and the continual services imposed on them by the Nazir wear them down with labour. This officer, who is superintendant of naval affairs, employs them, the greatest part of the year, in cutting down wood to build the caravelles; which they are obliged to convey, with infinite difficulty, to Rhodes. What do you suppose he gives, Madam, for the conveyance of a large tree, which has employed several men a considerable time? Fifteen sols (seven-pence halfpenny). But how much do you imagine each of these beams, delivered at the arsenal, costs the Grand Signior? Sixty livres! (fifty shillings.)

The present Nazir, not being able either to read or write, is obliged to employ Greeks

to

to manage his accounts, and these make no secret of his knavery. The pay of the builders, who labour in the dockyards, is fixed by the Porte; but this too he diminishes one half. If it happens to rain but an hour, that day's work is not reckoned; add to this, that in his accounts, he doubles the real number of the workmen.

The consequence is, that the caravelles built at Rhodes are very indifferent vessels; they remain so long upon the stocks, that their ribs sometimes become rotten before they are finished; but this does not hinder the builders from going on with the work. By this the Nazir soon amasses great riches. The cries of the oppressed are heard on every side against his injustice; but they are not regarded. The oppressor replies to every complaint with money; he purchases with a number of purses the protection of the Captain Pacha, and the profits he makes by his crimes ensure impunity.

It is distressing, Madam, to dwell on such acts of injustice, and to reflect that all the officers of government in these countries are alike guilty of them. These wretches, blinded by ambition, think only of amassing wealth,

to

to procure higher employments at court. Can they be ignorant that they themselves must then become the victims of the rapacity of the Grand Signior, who never fails to find them guilty, to profit by their spoils? But such is the manner in which the Ottoman provinces are governed; all the gold they possess is swallowed up in Constantinople; and while the capital overflows with riches, they are languishing in the extremest poverty. The people, therefore, in despair, are every where ripe for rebellion, and shake the throne with violent concussions. The empire, tottering to its foundations, is on the brink of ruin. Such are the effects of despotism. May sovereigns never lose sight of the important truth, that in proportion as they render their authority more absolute, they really lose their power, and that they are never nearer destruction than when a whole people tremble in their presence!

I shall finish this long letter, Madam, by saying a word or two of the national character of the Rhodians. This, like that of every other people, is modified by climate,

mate, government, and religion. The island enjoys the happiest temperature, and its air is pure and salubrious. No epidemical disorders are known, but what are imported from other countries. The westerly winds, which prevail for nine months in the year, moderate the heats of summer; and, in the winter, ice, snow, and even hoar-frosts are unknown. In the dullest day, the sun disperses the clouds, and shews himself at least for some hours; through the whole year he enlightens the island with his beneficent rays, fertilizes the earth, and purifies the air, which is naturally humid. "Tiberius," says Suetonius (x), "made a stay for some time at Rhodes, enchanted with the beauty and salubrious climate of the island." So fine a sky, so delightful a temperature, have a manifest influence on the inhabitants. The Turks born in the island are of a milder disposition, and possess more politeness and urbanity, than in the other provinces of the empire. Less exposed than the Greeks to the rapacity of the great, and peaceably enjoying their property, they here lead a hap-

(x) Suetonius in Tiberio, cap. xi.

py life in the bosom of their families, and among them we meet with cheerfulness, integrity, and social manners. The Greeks live under the same sky ; but, accustomed perpetually to crouch beneath the iron sceptre that crushes them, they become hypocritical, deceitful, and dishonest. The proudest of mankind in prosperity, they are equally mean and cringing in misfortune. They are infected with all the vices which are the consequence of servitude ; yet, compelled, as it were, by the force of climate, they sometimes indulge in merriment : their joy, however, is not the mild and tranquil joy of the Turks ; but a clamorous and irrational mirth ; the festivity, in short, of slaves, who, forgetting, for a moment, their wretched condition, dance amid their chains.

I did not myself continue long enough in Rhodes, to have made all the observations collected in this letter : I am indebted for them to M. Potonier, my host, who had resided five years in the country, and knows it perfectly.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T.

L E T T E R XIV.

To M. L. M.

Syme.

I QUITTED with regret, Madam, the
isle of Rhodes, where so many memorable
events were continually recurring to my
mind. While the vessel was bearing us far
from its shore, my eye still continued fixed
on this ancient country of the arts, and I
could not but lament its destiny. Will those
happy days never return, when every po-
lished nation did homage to this island ; when
the talents of her artists, and the eloquence
of her orators, attracted a crowd of foreigners ?
When science has once ceased to enlighten a
country, must it remain for ever obscured by
barbarous darkness ? No : I would rather
wish to believe that the glorious days of
Greece will again return, and that a people
inimical to despotism, again establishing a wise
system of government, will restore its sciences
and arts. Such were my reflections as we
sailed through the strait which separates
Rhodes

Rhodes from the continent of Asia. If this island had a navy, it might become mistress of that passage, and command the entrance of the Archipelago to the East ; which post, in the hands of any other nation but the Turks, would be of the greatest importance.

We continued advancing slowly. The wind, impeded by the high lands, scarcely swelled our sails, and, at length, entirely ceased, and left us, for two days, becalmed. The sea was perfectly unruffled, and reflected the rays of the sun like a polished mirror, while the motionless vessel seemed nailed to its surface. The first time we sail in these seas we imagine ourselves in the midst of a great lake, as we are continually surrounded either by islands or the continent. The land appears on every part of the horizon, and, whichever way we direct our view, we perceive perpendicular rocks, or threatening shoals. The sight, however, has nothing terrible in it to the mariner, who well knows he can easily find shelter from the tempest in innumerable harbours.

Proceeding onward, with a favourable breeze, we had overshot Syme, so famous for its sponges ; and, leaving Telos, the high grounds
of

of which we perceived on the edge of the horizon to the south, we were about to enter the bay of Cos, at present commonly called Stanchio.

I was ardently wishing to see the country of Hippocrates, and Apelles, when the wind suddenly died away, and left us in sight of Nisyros; which Neptune (z), as fables tell, raised out of the sea by a stroke of his trident.

The calm we had enjoyed was deceitful; beneath it lurked the tempest. The west was overcast with dark clouds, and the wind soon began to blow from that quarter in violent squalls. The captain instantly put about his ship, and, far from endeavouring to gain the port of Nisyros, steered directly from it before the wind, and took refuge in a deep bay of the isle of Syme. Thus, in a few hours, we lost all the way we had gained in several days.

This island, which received its name from Syme, a (y) daughter of Jalyfus, is a dependency of Rhodes. It is only a rock of small

(y) Stephanus Byzantinus.

(z) Ibid.

extent,

extent, the soil of which, extremely stony, and burnt up by the heat of the sun, produces neither grain nor fruit. A few vineyards among the rocks yield a good wine, but the rest of the island is barren ; and nothing is to be found upon it but briars, wild almond-trees, thorns, and tufts of myrtle in the more moist places. The fishery for sponges, which grow in abundance round the island, is the only support of its inhabitants. Men, women, and children, all know how to dive, and plunge into the waters in search of the only patrimony bestowed on them by nature. The men, especially, are inimitable in this dangerous art ; they throw themselves into the sea, and dive to a very great depth ; but they frequently strain themselves by retaining their breath too long, and, on coming out of the water, often vomit great quantities of blood. Sometimes they are in danger of destruction from the monsters of the deep. The knife they carry in their hands would be but an inadequate weapon for their defence ; but, accustomed perfectly to distinguish objects through that pellucid element, as soon as they discover these voracious fish, they shoot up with the greatest rapidity
from

from a prodigious depth, and in an instant are in their boat. These particulars I learned from a diver of the country ; he complained of violent pains in his loins, the hardships of his condition, and the little profit he derived from his occupation ; and I cannot doubt but he had sufficient reason. He had a son with him in his boat, ten years of age, whom he was teaching his trade, the only inheritance he had to leave him.

The bad weather detaining us some days in the harbour of Syme, I made an excursion into the island, and visited the village inhabited by the divers. Every thing I saw was a proof of poverty and distress : the streets are narrow and dirty, and the houses only miserable huts, into which day-light can scarcely penetrate. The people, who have a reserved and melancholy air, appear absorbed in their own wretchedness, and exhibit none of that lively curiosity usually inspired by the sight of strangers. Both men and women are dressed in the same manner ; they all wear the long robe, the sash, and a shawl round their heads, and are only to be distinguished by the difference of features. These miserable people are, besides, subject to a cruel malady. Leprosy,
the

the most hideous of all the scourges that afflict humanity, is very common at Syme. The wretched victims, who suffer from it, are seen stretching out their hands to passengers at a distance, and begging alms with a voice scarcely audible; they are separated from all society, and drag on the remainder of a dreadful life in torments. Shuddering at what I saw, I was about to return to the ship, when a Greek priest forced me, by repeated solicitations, to go into his house. He made me sit down on a small wooden seat, the only one he had, while he himself squatted down upon a wretched mat. He told me that he had been at Rome, where he had studied in the seminary *de propaganda*; that he had been made choice of for pastor of Syme, and that he preferred this country to all the charming scenes of Italy. I congratulated him on his taste and his travels, but could not help inquiring within myself how it was possible to like such a place of abode. This good father was very old; a long white beard descended on his breast; his appearance was venerable; and whether he really thought himself happy in the station where Heaven had placed him, or whether he felt a satisfaction

faction in conversing with an European in the Italian language, which he had almost forgotten during forty years absence from Rome, I know not, but pleasure sparkled in his eyes, and he loaded me with compliments. He quitted me for an instant, dived into a dark hole he called his cellar, and returned immediately with a large pitcher of wine; out of which he poured some into a small wooden porringer, and, after moistening his lips, desired me to drink. The appearance of the vessel gave me some disgust, and I wished to decline the compliment, but the laws of hospitality forbade me. It would have been improper to offend my host: I therefore took the cup, and drank his health; he drank also to mine, and again presented it to me, but I politely refused. I remembered that Baucis and Philemon dwelt in a little cottage, and that their table was only three feet long; but could not but recollect that their vessels, simple as they were, were neat and shining, and that cleanliness in every thing about them almost concealed their indigence. My good old man was as poor as that virtuous couple; but his ragged mat, his smoaky roof, and his cup as black as foot, had

had nothing in them to gratify either the sense of smelling, or of sight. I left him with thanks for his politeness; he wished me a prosperous voyage, and we parted good friends.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R VIII.

To M. L. M.

AFTER three days stay in the harbour of Syme, we set sail, intending to return to the bay of Cos, make the north part of the island, and then take our departure for Candia. The westerly winds would then no longer have been unfavourable: but our evil genius again met us at the opening of the Straights. Twice were we prevented from entering, and twice driven back toward Nifyros. Our captain, considering this disappointment as the consequence of a decree of fate, passed the southern point of Stanchio, and bore away directly for the isle of Crete. The wind continued to blow with violence from the north-west: the waves beat furiously

ously against the sides of the vessel, and sometimes broke over the deck with a dreadful noise. During the night we were greatly alarmed; a large wave forced into the captain's cabin, where I lay, and my servant's bed, which was next the door, was laid under water: he jumped out of his sleep, thought himself drowning in the sea, and set up a hideous cry. I got up in a fright, and, seeing the cabin full of water, thought the vessel had opened her sides; but we were soon relieved from our fears; the water had entered by the hatches, which had been left open, and, on shutting them down, we were sufficiently secured from such accidents.

At day-break we discovered the isle of Dia, now commonly called Standia, where vessels touch in their way to Candia, being obliged to unload here part of their merchandize, as the harbour of the capital, almost choaked up since it has been in the possession of the Turks, will not admit vessels of more than two hundred tons when fully laden. We were making great way, and entertained hopes of, at length, reaching our desired haven. All on board were in high spirits, and congratulating each other that we had only one hour's sail, when

when the wind suddenly shifted to the west, and blew very hard. The ship began to drift, and solicitude and disappointment succeeded to our flattering hopes. The captain in vain used every effort not to lose way, by making repeated tacks, in which we approached the isle of Crete near enough to discover the verdant slopes of the hills near the shore; but this delightful prospect only aggravated our misfortune. For two days and nights we have continued tacking before Standia, without being able to gain the harbour.

The wind continuing to increase, the sea became furious, and the waves broke violently over the deck. The vessel, too deeply laden, would but ill obey the helm, and every moment seemed ready to be swallowed up amid the liquid mountains that hung over us on every side. The captain, yielding to necessity, once more put before the wind, and steered for the isle of Cafos. We now went at a great rate, and, in a few hours, the rocks, which shut in the road, opened to our view: the sea dashed against them with a dreadful noise, and the foaming breakers rose to a prodigious height. As we drew nearer, our situation appeared still more perilous.

None of the crew were acquainted with the road, or knew where to cast anchor. They had intended at first to come within the shoal to the west, and were on the brink of certain destruction. In an instant we found ourselves amid the breakers, which are there almost level with the surface of the water. The crew turned pale at their danger, instantly put about the helm, and we escaped shipwreck only by the length of the vessel. Had the ship refused to obey the helm, she must have driven on sharp rocks, which would have dashed her into a thousand pieces. A large bark, which lay at anchor behind a small island on the north side of the road, saved us, by pointing out the true anchoring ground.

We have now, Madam, been at sea above six weeks, constantly buffeted by the winds, driven from island to island, from country to country, and seeking Candia, as Ulysses sought Ithaca. His voyages every day appear to me more probable. Our sailors, it is true, are unworthy of the days of Homer: on the smallest appearance of bad weather, they run to hide themselves in the nearest harbour. Since our departure from Alexandria, a French captain would have made six voyages to Crete.

The

The superstition of these Greeks is equal to their ignorance. They really believe their ship enchanted, and look on me with an evil eye: I am positively afraid they consider me as the magician, whose forceries occasion their misfortunes. Fanatic as they are to an excess, they may take it into their heads, that their disappointments are occasioned by an heretic, and that, by throwing him into the sea, the persecution of Heaven will cease. Be that as it may; some of them have actually been in the boat, in search of a Greek priest, to destroy the enchantment. He, not long ago, came on board in his ceremonial habit, with a censer in one hand, and a *goupillon* (a vessel for sprinkling the holy water) in the other. He wore a long gown over his black robe; and his long beard, contracted eyebrows, and pointed bonnet, made him rather appear the magician himself. A basin of holy water was carried before him by a boy; and the grave father began by sprinkling our chamber, without sparing any who were present. He gave his benediction to the crew, the decks, the masts, and every rope; repeating a great variety of forms of exorcism, to free us from the power of Satan. He afterward went over the
whole

whole ship, with the censer in his hand, and burning perfumes, of which each of us had his share. After the ceremony was over, the priest held out a little bason, into which a few pieces of money were thrown, and he departed promising us a prosperous voyage, and much good fortune. The sailors now believing themselves unbewitched, appeared perfectly satisfied ; and cannot perceive that their ignorance and inexperience is the only charm that has obstructed them in their voyage : to discover this would imply a degree of knowledge to which they are utter strangers. Superstition is the daughter of ignorance, which is born with the human race, and with that alone will be destroyed. The Greeks, endowed with a lively and active imagination, appear at all times to have been more subject to this weakness than other nations, as seems sufficiently proved by the multitude of temples dedicated to Neptune in the islands of the Archipelago, and the tragical story of the sacrifice of Iphigenia, to obtain favourable winds.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T-

L E T T E R XVI.

To M. L. M.

Cafos.

WE must not always consider the obstacles we meet with at sea, Madam, as a misfortune, since sometimes we may derive more advantage and improvement from adverse winds than from prosperous gales. After having been for two days within sight of the smiling shores of Crete, without being able to land there; and after contemplating, not without repining at our fate, the verdant fields and beauteous prospects of that country, I murmured against the wind, which had compelled us to abandon them, and our anchoring in the road of Cafos seemed to me a misfortune. Since I have become acquainted with the inhabitants of that island, however, I have seen reason to alter my opinion, and the wind must detain us here a long time before I wish it to change.

“(a) Cafos is one of the Cyclades. . . . It
“received its name from Cafo, father of

(a) Steph. Byzant. The French captains, by a corruption of the name, call it *l'Isle du Gaze*.

“Cleo-

“ Cleomachus. This little island sent a colony to Mount Casius, dependent on Syria.”
 “ (b) Casos,” says Strabo, “ is distant from Carpathus (now called Scarpanto) seventy stadia, or two leagues and a half, and two hundred and fifty stadia, or nine leagues, from Samonium (c), a promontory of Crete. It is eighty stadia (three leagues) in circumference; on it is a town of the same name, and round it several smaller islands.” Pliny (d) gives the distances very differently; but he was mistaken. I have visited the places, and must pronounce in favour of the accuracy of Strabo.

The isle of Casos has suffered the common fate of the Archipelago. It is now subject to the Turks, but they dare not inhabit it, because it has no fort. They would be afraid of being made prisoners by the privateers of Malta, as has happened to them more than once at Antiparos, and other places destitute of fortresses. This fear is a most fortunate circumstance for the inhabitants, who owe to

(b) Strabo, lib. x.

(c) This promontory, situated on the east side of the island of Crete, is now called Cape Solomon.

(d) Pliny, lib. iv. c. 12.

that alone the tranquility, happiness, and liberty they enjoy.

The day after we cast anchor, I was impatient to go on shore. The boat accordingly was launched, and we rowed towards the rocks which surrounded the island, but were at a loss where to land. Every part of the shore was defended by dangerous shoals, over which the foaming waves broke with great noise and violence. On whichever side we cast our eyes, Cafos appeared inaccessible. At length one of the inhabitants perceiving our embarrassment, came down from the village, and pointed out to us, by waving his handkerchief, the place to which we should direct our course. We reached the place, after coasting about a league along the island. The ground here becomes lower, and forms a valley, at the extremity of which a small basin has been dug for the reception of boats. The entrance is only twelve feet wide, and very difficult of access, as it must be passed through exactly in the middle. If the boat should touch the sides, which are sharp rocks, it would be in great danger of being dashed to pieces. Add to this that, when we arrived before the entrance, a violent swell was ebbing out of it. The

Casiot

Casiot called one of his countrymen, and placing themselves on each side, they made a sign to us to pull strong. As soon as our boat had entered the dangerous pass, they guided it with long poles, to prevent it from striking against the rocks, and thus conducted it into port. Through this passage alone is it possible to get on shore in the island. The inhabitants might widen it if they chose, but they prefer leaving it thus dangerous, since while it remains so, they are under little apprehension from their enemies.

The Casiot, who had shewn us the harbour, politely invited us to go up to the village, and we followed him with pleasure. I was dressed in the French style, with a sword, hat, and every other appurtenance of the dress of my nation. The news of the arrival of strangers soon spread, and the women and children came out of their houses, and waited for us at the top of the hill. They shewed a great deal of curiosity, and examined us attentively. When we passed them, they all modestly cast down their eyes. Among the crowd, there were some very handsome. Several of them saluted us, wishing us a good day, saying: "You are welcome!" and we answered

answered them with the usual eastern expression :

“ May the day be happy for you and for your
“ guests !”

The guide, who conducted us, was one of the principal inhabitants of the island. He pressed me to step into his house, and introduced me into a hall, which, though not magnificently furnished, was sufficiently provided with every thing conducive to cleanliness and convenience. Around it was a sofa. He seated me on a raised bench, and placed himself below, while breakfast was preparing. Soon after, his wife and daughter appeared, with new-laid eggs, figs, and grapes. The girl blushed at sight of a stranger, whose dress must, no doubt, appear to her very extraordinary. Whilst we were breakfasting with a good appetite, and my host was pouring me out some excellent wine in a large glass, most of the women of the village came to pay him a visit. They saluted us, and seated themselves, without ceremony, round the apartment. They had been brought by curiosity, and soon began to whisper one another, and make their remarks on the French dress. Europeans rarely land in this solitary island, and the inhabitants, accustomed to see
nothing

nothing but bald heads, wrapped round with shawls, long robes fastened with sashes, and venerable beards, could not but view with astonishment a foreigner with long plaited hair, without mustachios, and wearing a cocked hat, and short coat, that came no lower than his knees. They appeared greatly struck with the contrast, and a half smile, which was sometimes visible on their countenances, was not improbably a sign they were employed in making satyrical observations on the peculiarities of my habit, while I, on my side, was no less amused with them. My attention was especially engaged by two young females, who would have been acknowledged to be handsome, even in Paris.

The least of the two had eyes full of fire, and fine black eyebrows, equally arched. Her complexion was rather brown, but her features extremely animated. Her cheeks, delicately rounded, were every instant adorned with fresh roses. Her delicate little mouth seemed formed to say charming things. When she smiled, teeth white as snow agreeably contrasted the vermillion of her lips; and a most enchanting vivacity animated her whole countenance, which seemed to sparkle with

with wit and repartee. Her ebon locks fastened, according to the manner of the country, to the crown of her head, fell negligently on a neck which seemed of polished ivory, and terminated with a delightful swell in the most charming bosom ever seen. A boddice without sleeves, opening a little towards the top, afforded a glimpse of the exact proportion of her beautiful shape. A robe of the whitest and finest cotton, edged with a purple border, four fingers wide, and elegantly embroidered, descended to her feet, and her waist was loosely girded by a sash, which floated round her.

The second disputed with her the palm of beauty. Her shape was more elegant, and her carriage more noble. Her eyes shone with a soft languor, and seemed formed to inspire love and delight, while her long eye-lashes, modestly lowered, concealed their splendor, as if she were afraid of betraying the secrets of her soul. Her complexion was fairer, and her cheeks, less coloured, displayed the lily slightly tinged with the rose. Her features, though scarcely so expressive as those of her companion, had more regularity, and were models of symmetry and just proportion.

At

At the first glance, she but just appeared what may be called handsome, but on more mature consideration, the perfection of the whole of her beauties enforced the highest admiration. The charms of the former inspired a sudden joy, and it was impossible to look on her without pleasure. Those of the latter made less impression at the first view, but, on examination, an irresistible attraction forced every heart of sensibility to pay her sincerest homage.

All the women, who honoured us with their presence, were dressed in the same manner. They all wore the jacket, the sash, and the long robe of cotton. The only difference consisted in the embroidery, which varied according to their different tastes, and in the manner of wearing their hair, which some of them suffered to flow upon their shoulders in one or more tresses, while others fastened it to the crown of the head, letting it fall down again upon the neck. The two I have just mentioned were not the only ones who were handsome, but their beauty appeared to me most attractive.

You may possibly imagine, Madam, that, after the sad scenes to which I had been for
some

some time accustomed, my imagination was inflamed at the sight of these lovely females, and that I have taken a pleasure in embellishing them. That may indeed be the case; but if it be, the illusion was of some duration. I passed eight days in the island, and would not wish to alter a single feature in the portraits I have drawn. I have described what I saw, and what I felt. I own to you, however, that my surprise was equal to my pleasure. I expected to find on this rock, only miserable slaves, groaning under the oppressions of the Turks; instead of which I met with a cheerful and happy people, who were fortunate enough to be able to preserve their liberty amid the despotism and tyranny with which they are surrounded.

As soon as breakfast was over, the ladies retired. My host conducted me into another apartment; and, to inspire me with confidence in his countrymen, and especially in himself, he drew out of a chest two certificates, signed by two captains, of Provence, which he desired me to read. The first of these contained the following words:

“ Frenchmen, whom the tempest may
 “ throw upon this island, confide in the in-
 “ habitants.

“habitants. I was shipwrecked on these
“rocks, and they afforded me every succour
“that men owe each other in similar mis-
“fortunes.”

The other ran thus: “I warn such of my
“countrymen, as chance may bring into the
“*Isle du Gaze*, to be upon their guard, and
“put no confidence in the inhabitants.
“They are a set of thieves and knaves, and
“strangers have every thing to apprehend from
“their rapacity.”

I returned this singular writing to my host with an air of satisfaction, telling him, I had no occasion for these testimonies, to convince me of his honesty. He locked it up carefully, thinking he possessed a treasure, and this confidence gave me a favourable opinion of him. It was true, that he was ignorant of the contents, and that the second captain had deceived him, but I could not wish to rectify his mistake in a thing on which he seemed to set so great a value: especially as this paper, at the worst, could only produce a salutary diffidence in such as might read it. As for myself, I adhered to the first testimonial, and continued to live in familiarity with the Castles. The only precaution I took was, never to be seen without
being

being well armed and attended by a servant; even this, however, was unnecessary, for I never experienced any thing from these people but the kindest treatment.

Desirous of obtaining some knowledge of the island, I set out from the village, and directed my course toward the highest mountain, which I reached in an hour's walk. From hence we may discover Carpathus, which appears to be at no great distance, and extends from east to west. In front of the village, three little islands situated to the east, west, and north, form the extensive road in which our vessel lay at anchor. They are uncultivated, and produce nothing but brambles. Below the hill from which I made my observations, stands a small chapel surrounded by fig-trees. Here begin a chain of hills, that, bending into a semicircle, leave in the middle a plain of a league in circumference, which has been cleared out by the inhabitants, with infinite labour. They have torn up large pieces of rock, and removed heaps of stones, with which they have formed the walls of the inclosure. All this space is divided into compartments, and shared among the Cassiots. They sow barley and

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wheat

wheat here at the commencement of the rainy season, which lasts from October to February. The rain is not continual in these months, but none falls in any other; the remainder of the year the air is pure and serene, and both days and nights are continually fine and clear. The heats are moderated by the sea breezes, and beneath so beautiful a sky the inhabitants enjoy a delightful temperature, and are almost strangers to every kind of disease. The sides of the hills are covered with vineyards, the grapes of which produce a very agreeable wine. I could not help admiring the industry with which these islanders have been able to cultivate rocks, hardly covered with a few inches of earth, and rejoiced in the reflection that they were recompensed for their labours, and that the island sufficed for their subsistence.

When I had satisfied my curiosity, I returned to the house of my host, where they were waiting for me to dine. A hen, with rice, new-laid eggs, excellent pigeons, some cheese, and a glass of good wine, made me amends for the miserable repasts I had made on board. The men dined together, seated in a circle on the carpet, and the women in a separate
apart-

apartment. This is the custom, and, though not in the French taste, I was obliged to conform to it. Towards the end of our meal the cup was circulated from hand to hand. The company drank to me, wishing me a prosperous voyage; and I returned the compliment, by drinking health and happiness to the people of Cafos. The guests were beginning to grow merry, when the sound of musical instruments made us rise from table.

About twenty young girls, dressed all in white, with flowing robes, and plaited locks, entered the apartment, and with them a young man who played on the lyre, which he accompanied with his voice. Several of them were handsome, all healthy and lively, and there were among them some who even rivalled the two belles I have already described. I must own, Madam, that this scene appeared to me enchanting. The uniform dress of these nymphs, the modesty which heightened their charms, their becoming bashfulness, their joyous but decent merriment, all contributed to make me almost imagine myself suddenly transported to the island of Calypso. They began to range themselves in a ring, and invited me to dance. I did not wait for many entrea-

ties. The circle we formed is singular from the manner in which it is interwoven: the dancer does not give his hand to the two persons next him, but to those next them, so that you have your hands crossed before your neighbours, who are thus locked, as it were, in the links of a double chain. This interweaving is not without pleasure, for reasons by no means difficult to understand. In the middle of the circle stood the musician, who played and sang at the same time, while all the dancers kept exact time in advancing, retreating, or turning round him. For myself, I followed where my partners led me, my mind being less occupied with the dance than with the charming females who composed it.

The next day I took a view of the village. It consists of about a hundred houses, each of them inhabited by a single family: they are all of stone, built very strong: and contain, in general, two or three lower parlours, with a couple of rooms above. Each house has its oven, and cistern, cut out of the rock. The latter are filled during the rainy season, and the water is preserved in them pure and limpid. Besides this, a hundred
paces

paces below the village is a fine spring, which flows the whole year.

I entered several houses, where I found the women employed in spinning, and embroidering, and some in making the fine linens which they wear. Their frames are small, but well contrived, and they work with a great deal of skill. I every where met with activity, industry, and neatness. I afterwards paid visits to several of the girls I danced with the day before, and was received very favourably. I entered into conversation with them, and inquired why so many pretty women were to be seen in the island, and so few men, for I had only met with five or six. They answered that, during the spring, the summer, and part of autumn, the men were out at sea. "They trade," said they, "to different islands of the Archipelago, and return from time to time, to bring their families the provisions they may stand in need of, but only pass the winter with them. They sow the land in November, get in the harvest in March, and, immediately afterward, return to sea. The produce of the island not being sufficient for
" the

“ the maintenance of its inhabitants, they
“ are forced to seek supplies from other coun-
“ tries, with the assistance of which, if we
“ are not rich, we live at least in a comfort-
“ able mediocrity. The boys accompany
“ their fathers, and become sailors : while
“ they are absent, we spin cotton as you see,
“ and weave a part of it for their clothing
“ and our own.”

In these visits I could not but admire the regularity and wisdom of this little republic, the peace and harmony that reigned among its members, and, above all, that cheerfulness and content, which was so visible in their countenances. Happy people! said I to myself; ambition and intrigue trouble not your tranquillity; the thirst of gold hath not corrupted your manners; the quarrels, dissensions, and crimes with which it hath covered the earth, are to you unknown. Here no citizen, proud of his titles, or his wealth, tramples under foot his humble countrymen; no cringing valet flatters the vices of his master; man is equal to man, nor does the Casiot blush, or abase himself before the Casiot. Respect and mutual esteem unite you. Your enjoyments consist in the pure pleasures
which

which nature offers to all her children, and your happiness is founded on the durable basis of mediocrity and equality!

The respect I owe to truth, however, obliges me to confess that, in a private conversation with some of these handsome Cassiot girls, I drew a flattering picture of the happy lot of the ladies of France. I represented them as elegantly dressed, adorned with gold, silk, and diamonds; conveyed in superb carriages from show to show, and from entertainment to entertainment, surrounded by admirers only attentive to give them pleasure, and wholly occupied with their amusements, and a succession of new delights. I had only portrayed the roses of a life apparently so delicious, and my admiring hearers seemed enchanted with my description. They sighed, regretted their condition, and, despising the humbler pleasures to which they were born, could have wished to have been transported instantly to France. So natural is it to the human heart to quit the happiness it enjoys for the brilliant chimeras of imagination.

Another day I paid a visit to two sisters who were said to be very amiable. Melancholy reigned in their house, and sighs escaped

caped them amid their occupations. The eldest, who was about eighteen, was tall, well made, and had a very pleasing countenance. She had not been at the ball. A deep grief cast a veil over her beauty, and her cheeks had lost almost all their colour. A dying flame shone languidly in her eyes, and tears seemed ready to start. How much was I affected! Her younger sister shared in her sorrows, and resembled a flower which, growing in the shade, receives not the beneficent rays of the sun, but languishes at its opening. I could have wished to console these afflicted charmers; but I had no claim whatever on their hearts, and, in so short a time, could not inspire them with sufficient confidence to be permitted to dry up their tears. I knew that one of them had just lost a husband, whom she tenderly loved. I was told that they were the handsomest couple in the island, and united by the purest affection; but that, after having been married only a month, the unfortunate man was shipwrecked, and perished in the sea. "He is the more to be lamented," added my informers, "as he had not attained his twentieth year. The younger of these amiable girls, tenderly attached to her sister,

" par-

“ participates sincerely in her grief. This,
 “ however, is not the only cause of her melancholy ; she is sixteen, and not yet married ; and, in this country, men are scarce ;
 “ the sea devours a great number of them,
 “ and, therefore, many of our poor girls remain without husbands.”

This explained to me the reason why in Candia, and in several other cities, I have frequently met with Casiot girls, who have voluntarily forsaken their country. These young females, having neither protectors, friends, nor relations, are obliged to seek a maintenance by service. Their innocence is exposed to great dangers, and, frequently, led astray by example, or seduced by the temptations wealth ever has it in its power to offer, they embrace a life of licentiousness and debauchery. I have seen many of them, who had entirely forgotten the manners of their island, and totally lost that modesty, and ingenuoufness, which constitute the loveliest charm of their countrywomen.

During my stay at Cafos, a bark arrived, laden with rice, melons, pomegranates, and various fruits. Immediately almost all the women hastened down the hill with the
 greatest

greatest impatience; some to meet a husband, others a father, a brother, or a friend. I never witnessed stronger expressions of joy and tenderness; they embraced them with transport, pressed them to their bosoms, and thanked Heaven for once more restoring them to their anxious wishes. Every token of the most heartfelt joy, every expression of the tenderest love, was lavished on both sides. The scene was indeed most affecting. These, said I to myself, are the ancient Greeks; such was their lively imagination, ever ready to take fire, and such the exquisite sensibility, which distinguished them from all the nations of the earth. This rock has preserved them from the Turkish yoke, and they have retained their ancient character.

The afternoon of this memorable day was dedicated to pleasure. The Casiot captain gave a little ball, and I accepted of his invitation. The hall was filled with a number of lively girls, with their tresses perfumed, and dressed in their handsomest boddices, their best embroidered sashes, and their whitest gowns. Various rounds, such as I have before described, were formed. Two lyres, and fingers placed on a raised seat, animated the motions of the dancers,

dancers, and pleasure sparkled in every eye. The young men who had just arrived took their places at the side of their wives or mistresses, clasped them round the waist in dancing, and felt the palpitation of their hearts, while joy beamed in every face. The young Greek females, with downcast eyes, endeavoured to conceal the pleasure they felt; but their blushes, and their heaving bosoms, sufficiently shewed who were the objects of their affection. How great the pleasure of this simple recreation! Each motion gave a new sensation of delight. Our artificial dances may be infinitely more graceful, elegant, or majestic; but how cold are they when compared to this joyous round! In those vanity alone is gratified; in these heart speaks to heart, by a look, a smile, and, above every thing, by the touch. All-wise Nature has implanted the means of happiness within ourselves. The rich man flatters himself he shall obtain it amid the brilliant companies he assembles, and, by displaying pomp and magnificence, endeavours to purchase it with gold. Alas! knows he not that this inconstant divinity flies the importunity of ostentation, disdains a bribe, and contemns the pride and vanity of wealth!

The

The westerly winds have detained us eight days in the road of Cafos, and I thank Heaven for their continuance. I have visited countries, on which liberal Nature has lavished all her treasures. I have seen others where tyrants have compelled her to refrain her bounties, and every where have found nations unhappy, not by their own fault, not by the sterility of the soil, but by the vices of the government to which they are subject. In the midst of slaves crouching beneath the Ottoman yoke, I have found a rock, only three leagues in circumference, on which the Turk dares not to set his foot, and inhabited by a free and happy people. There each father of a family is a sovereign within his own house; he decides every difference, and his decrees are laws, which cannot but be equitable, since they are only dictated by paternal tenderness. When any disputes arise, the priests and the old men assemble and decide them; but disputes cannot be frequent among citizens, who are all equal and alike unacquainted with poverty or riches. All the members of this little society are employed; and I have seen the handsomest of their women go down into the valley, to wash their linen at the fountain

fountain, as in the days of Homer. They cheer their labours with a song; nor do they imagine themselves disgraced by their humble employment. It is only in countries where the rich can purchase service from the hands of the poor, that they blush to make use of their own.

Travellers, who have made observations on the character of the Greeks under the Ottoman yoke, justly reproach them with hypocrisy, perfidy, and meanness. These vices are not inherent in their nature, but are the consequence of the servitude in which they live. The inhabitants of Cafos are also Greeks; but, enlightened, and warmed, by a ray of liberty, they possess industry, sensibility, and integrity. Send them a Cadi, a Pacha, or a Mouteveli, they will become as perfidious, and corrupt as the rest of their nation. From this observation we may be convinced of the first and most sacred of political truths; that, in general, man is virtuous in proportion as he preserves his liberty and natural rights, and that as he is deprived of these, he becomes vicious and degenerate.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T-

LETTER XVII.

To M. L. M.

Candia.

OUR stay in the road of Cafos is at an end. The captain, impatient to be gone, weighed anchor on the first appearance of good weather. It seems as if the wind, wearied with finding him still at sea, had at length determined to conduct him to the place of his destination, for it blew right abaft, and carried us rapidly towards Standia; in less than a day we have passed the further point of the island, and got safe into the harbour. We arrived exactly in time, for scarcely was the anchor down, before the westerly wind resumed its sway, and the sea became furious: a quarter of an hour later, and we should have been forced to return to Cafos, which will not soon be effaced from my memory.

Dia, now called Standia, is four leagues distant from the city of Candia. It is absolutely barren; we meet with neither vil-

lages

lages nor inhabitants. The briars, thorns, and brambles, that cover the rocks, serve as food for the wild goats, which are found there in great numbers: they run with such swiftness among the precipices, that it is almost impossible to approach them. We have given chase to several without success.

Standia has three ports at which vessels touch, that are laden for Candia. From the summit of the mountain we discovered the town; but the sea was so rough that no boat would venture to release us from our prison; the second day after our arrival, however, a resolute Turk came off to us in a little skiff. He told us that our arrival had been long expected: that they had seen us beating off the coast, and were apprehensive we had perished. The bad weather still continued, and detained us on the desert rocks of Standia; but at length, on the fourth day, a boat came for us, and conveyed us to Candia, about two months after our departure from Alexandria.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T.

LETTER XVIII.

To M. L. M.

Candia.

AS often, Madam, as the curious inquirer, excited by the desire of knowledge, endeavours to investigate the origin of ancient nations, mythology first presents him with gods and heroes, for the most part emblematical. The fabulous history of every celebrated people always precedes their more authentic annals. This is less interesting to us, who with all our labours can only conjecture the truth through the veil of allegory, but was of much more importance to the ancients. Though the multitude saw nothing in it but a sacred theology, to which they were obliged implicitly to submit their reason, the philosophers, initiated in these mysteries, discovered in them the opinions of learned men on the formation of the universe, astronomy, physics, and natural history.

Before we take a survey of the isle of Candia, let us first, Madam, with your permission, visit the ancient *Crete*. The information this will procure us will guide us on
our

our way, and serve to explain many facts, the origin of which would otherwise be unknown to us. It is only by comparing the past with the present, that we can be enabled to form a just idea of this famous country. I am aware, Madam, that it is become almost ridiculous to speak of the ancients, and that it is the fashion, either to extol them to the skies, or to depreciate them without measure; but reason observes a just medium, and weighs men's actions in an equal balance; she makes no distinction of ages nor of persons, but admires, or condemns, with impartiality, whatever merits eulogium or censure.

The Cretan mythologists, quoted by Diodorus Siculus (*e*), say, that the first inhabitants of their island were the Idean Dactyli, who lived near Mount Ida (*f*); they were considered as magicians, from their possessing various kinds of knowledge, and especially

(*e*) Diodorus Siculus, lib. v.

(*f*) Other writers make them come from Mount Ida in Phrygia. They are not agreed, why they received the name of Dactyli. Diomedes the grammarian says, it was given them on account of the skill with which they moved their fingers, or because they invented the metrical foot, called the Dactyl, or because they were ten in number, &c.

the science of the sacred mysteries (*g*). Orpheus, so celebrated for poetry and music, was their disciple. They discovered the use of fire, and the art of working iron and copper in Mount Berecynthus, near Apta (*h*). These valuable inventions obtained them divine honours. One of them, named Hercules, rendered himself famous by his courage and heroic actions. He instituted the Olympic games; and it is only from the similarity of the name, that posterity attributed this institution to the son of Alcmena, who trod indeed in the steps of his predecessor, and, like him, became immortal.

(*i*) The Idean Dactyli gave rise to the Curetes.

(*g*) The name of magician was anciently not odious. It did not convey with it the idea of knavery and imposture, which has since been annexed to it. Those were called magicians who, instructed in the sacred mysteries, understood the sense of allegories, and discovered natural truths, concealed under the emblems of fable. The Telchines at Rhodes, the Dactyli of Crete, the Egyptian priests, and Moses himself, were accounted magicians.

(*h*) Strabo, who makes the Telchines pass from Crete into the island of Rhodes, says, that they first brought thither the art of working metals.

(*i*) Others consider them as the children of the Earth.
Strabo

Curetes. The latter at first inhabited the forests, caverns, and mountains: they afterwards taught men to dwell in houses, and contributed to civilize them by their institutions. They instructed them to collect flocks of sheep, to tame wild animals, and make them subservient to their wants, and to profit by the labour of bees, by keeping them in hives. They taught them the use of the bow, and formed them to the chase. They forged the sword, and were the inventors of military dances. The noise they made in dancing, armed, prevented Saturn from hearing the cries of Jupiter, whose education had been intrusted to them by Rhea. Assisted by the nymphs, they brought up the god in a cave of Mount Ida, feeding him with the milk of the goat Amalthea (*k*), and the honey of their bees.

At

Strabo says, that the name of Curetes was given them from the care they took of the infancy of Jupiter. lib. x.

(*k*) Lactantius, lib. i. cap. 22, says, "Didymus relates, that Melisseus, king of Crete, was the first who sacrificed to the gods; that he introduced new rites and pompous ceremonies; that he had two daughters, Amalthea and Melissa, and that they nourished the infant Jupiter

At this period the Cretan mythology places the birth of the Titans, who dwelt near to Cnosus, where the palace of Rhea was to be seen, their expeditions over the whole earth, their war against Ammon, who was defended by Bacchus, the nuptials of Jupiter and Juno, celebrated near the river Therenus in Crete, and the gods, goddesses, and heroes, to whom they gave birth.

The most illustrious of these heroes were Minos and Rhadamanthus (1): they are said to have been the sons of Jupiter and Europa, who had been brought into the island upon a bull. Minos having become king, built several cities, the most considerable of which were Cnosus, on the coast opposite Asia, Phaestus on the south side, and Cydon on the west, fronting Peloponnesus. He instituted admirable laws, which he feigned to have received from Jupiter, in a cave of Mount Ida.

Rhadamanthus distinguished himself by the justice of his judgments, and by the severity

“with goat’s milk and honey.” This is the reason, perhaps, why the poets have said, that the goat Amalthea fed Jupiter.

(1) Diodorus Siculus, lib. v.

with

with which he punished offenders. He reigned over several large islands, and almost the whole coast of Asia, which submitted to his sceptre, on account of the reputation he had acquired for justice. The mythologists have made him judge of the infernal regions, to determine on the fate of the virtuous and the wicked, and have decreed him the same honours as to Minos, the most just of kings (*m*).

Thus far I have followed the Cretan traditions, as preserved by Diodorus; but historians are not agreed among themselves. There are a multitude of opinions concerning the first inhabitants of Crete. Strabo (*n*), who has learnedly discussed them, after several pages, says: "I am not fond of fables, yet I
 " have entered into a long detail of these,
 " because they have relation to theology.
 " When we treat of the gods, we ought to
 " weigh ancient opinions, and distinguish them
 " from fables. The ancients delighted in

(*m*) Rhadamanthus was a just man, instructed by Minos, not in the whole art of government, but in the part of the royal administration which concerns justice; hence he received the name of the just judge. Plato de Minnoide.

(*n*) Strabo, lib. x.

" throwing

“ throwing a veil over their knowledge of
 “ nature. It is not possible to explain all their
 “ enigmas ; but, by placing the numerous al-
 “ legories they have left us in a full light, by
 “ examining with attention in what they re-
 “ semble each other, and in what they differ,
 “ we may, by comparison, arrive at truth.”

Let us quit mythology, and inquire what history has left us of greatest certainty, respecting the different inhabitants of Crete. This celebrated island received its name from Cres, the first of its kings (*o*). He was the author of many useful discoveries, which contributed to the happiness of his people (*p*), who, in gratitude to their benefactor, and to preserve the memory of his benefits, immortalized his name, by bestowing it on their island (*q*).

To

(*o*) Eusebius in Chron. Cres, a native, was the first who reigned in Crete, and gave it his name. It was said that he was one of the Curetes who concealed and nourished Jupiter.—Isid. Orig. lib. xiv. c. 6. This island was called Crete, from one Cretes, who dwelt there.—Cedrenus. Crete received its name from Cretes, who was king of the island.

(*p*) Diod. Sic. lib. v.

(*q*) Stephen of Byzantium, who reports the opinions of
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(*r*) To distinguish the native Cretans from foreigners, they were called Eteo Cretans. Numerous colonies settled in the island from all parts of Greece, invited by the beauty of the climate, and the fertility of the soil. The Lacedemonians, Argives, and Athenians, were the principal states who sent colonies thither (*s*). This made Homer say, “ (*t*) Crete “ is a large island, in the midst of a stormy “ sea. The soil is rich and fertile. It contains an innumerable people, and is adorned by a hundred cities. Its inhabitants “ speak various languages. We there find “ Achæans, the brave Eteocretæ, Cydonians, “ Dorians, and the divine Pelasgi.” The Eteocretans inhabited the southern part of the island, where they founded the city of Præsus, and erected a temple to Jupiter Dictæus (*u*).

the ancients respecting this island, says, it was so named from *Cores*, or *Cretus*, son of Jupiter and the nymph *Ida*, or *Creta*, one of the Hesperides, &c. but he adds, that the best derivation is from *Cres*, one of its inhabitants. It had many other names, unnecessary to repeat in this place.

(*r*) Eustat. in *Iliad*.

(*s*) Scylax in *Periplo*. Dicæarchus de *Vit. Græc*.

(*t*) *Odyss*, lib. xix.

(*u*) Strabo, lib. x.

Cres

Cres was not the only monarch who reigned over the island of Crete; he had successors, but we can obtain little information concerning them from history; we only find the names of some of these kings, and a few events, intermixed with fabulous accounts, which happened under others (v).

Among

(v) The following are the names of these kings, as collected by Murtius, in his learned dissertation, on the island of Crete.

JUPITER, the first.

CRES, who gave name to the island.

AMMON, who, after reigning in Lybya, came to Crete, and married the daughter of Cres. He was the prince whom Bacchus defended against the Titans.

MELISSEUS, whose daughters brought up Jupiter.

JUPITER II. who was brought up by the Curetes. After him is a great chasm.

CECROPS.

CYDON.

APTERAS, who built the city of Aptera.

LAPS, or LAPITHAS.

TEUTAMUS, who took possession of the island at the head of the Dorians and Pelasgians.

ASTERIUS, who espoused Europa, carried off by Jupiter, and adopted her children.

MINOS I. the adopted son of Asterius, who died without children. He married Itona, daughter of Lycastus, and had by her Lycasta.

LYCASTUS,

Among these sovereigns we find two Jupiters, and two of the name of Minos. Writers in general, however, confound these, and attribute actions to one only, which should be shared between the two. This observation is particularly true of Minos, whom antiquity celebrates as the wisest of legislators. The place assigned him in the infernal regions is a very unequivocal testimony of the glorious reputation he had acquired by his justice. "It is not without reason," says Plato, "that Greece has adopted the laws of Crete, since they are founded on those solid principles which cannot but render the people who are subject to them flourishing and happy (x)." One of his laws

LYCASTUS, who espoused Ida, daughter of a Corybant, and had by her Minos the second.

MINOS II. who married Pasiphae, daughter of the sun. He had two other wives and several children.

DEUCALION, son and successor of the second Minos, and different from the son of Prometheus. He espoused Phædra, sister of Theseus.

CATREUS, brother to Deucalion. He built the city of Catrea.

IDOMENEUS, grandson of Minos. He, together with Merion, conducted eighty ships to the siege of Troy. (Here ends this incomplete list.)

(x) Plato, de Legibus, lib. i.

was

was expressed in these words: *Let the Cretans never drink together to intoxication.* The following was well calculated to check the presumptuous ardour of youth (y). “ Let not
 “ the young men indulge an indiscreet curiosity respecting the laws ; let them not examine whether the legislator did right or
 “ wrong to enact them ; but let them exclaim with one voice, *They are good, because
 “ they proceed from the Gods.* If any of the
 “ old men discover in them abuses proper to
 “ be reformed, let him address himself to a
 “ magistrate, or discuss the subject with his
 “ equals, but never in presence of young
 “ people.”

(z) These admirable laws were engraven on tables of brass, and Talos, the minister of Minos, visited the towns and cities three times every year, to see they were properly observed (a).

The king of Crete, well knowing how necessary the marvellous is to gain credit with the multitude, pretended that he had received

(y) Plato, de Minoide.

(z) Cicero, Tuscul. lib. iii. says, the laws of Crete given by Minos, or Jupiter, or as the poets tell us, by his advice, are a source of instruction for youth.

(a) Plato, de Minoide.

them from Jupiter his father, in a cave of Mount Ida. In the same manner Lycurgus, before he published his laws, repaired to Delphi, and declared that he received them from Apollo. Thus Numa ascribed his institutions to the nymph Egeria, and Mahomet his religious effusions to the angel Gabriel.

On the other hand, the ancients describe Minos as a prince who was the slave of his passions, and a barbarous conqueror! Having become enamoured of the nymph Dictynna, who resisted his desires, he pursued her to the extremity of the island, and forced her to precipitate herself into the sea, where she was saved by some fishermen, who received her in their nets. He was the first of the Greeks who appeared in the Mediterranean at the head of a powerful fleet (*b*). He made a conquest of the Cyclades, whence he expelled the Carians, and having settled colonies there, committed the government of them to his sons (*c*).

(*b*) Strabo, lib. x. Aristot. Polit. lib. ii. Diodorus Siculus, lib. v. Plin. lib. vii. cap. 56.

(*c*) Thucydides, lib. v.

Having learnt, during his stay at Paros (*d*), that his son Androgeus was slain at Athens, he declared war against Ægeus, and imposed on him the shameful tribute from which Theseus delivered his countrymen. He took up arms against Nisus, king of Megara, made him prisoner, by the treachery of his daughter Scylla, and put him to death, together with Megareus the son of Hippomenes, who had brought him succour. Dædalus, against whom he was incensed, despairing of moving so implacable a prince, employed all the resources of his genius to escape from his resentment. He fled into Sicily, gained the protection of king Cocalus, and obtained an asylum at his court. Valerius Flaccus (*e*) has given a truly poetical description of this flight: "Thus Dædalus, become a bird, precipitated him-

(*d*) Apollodorus, lib. iii. Having been informed of the death of his son, at Paros, while he was sacrificing to the Graces, he immediately took the crown from his head, and quitted his flute: he, however, finished the sacrifice. To preserve the memory of this event, the inhabitants of Paros long sacrificed to the Graces, without a crown, and without a flute.

(*e*) Valerius Flaccus, lib. i.

" self

" self from Mount Ida, with resounding wings,
 " Near him flew his companion on shorter
 " pinions; they resembled a cloud rising
 " into the air. Minos seeing his vengeance
 " frustrated, trembled with rage; his eyes
 " were wearied with vainly following the
 " fugitives through the immensity of space;
 " and the guards returned to Gortyna,
 " with their quivers filled with arrows."

The king of Crete, however, did not so easily
 give up his prey; he equipped a fleet, pursued
 him into Sicily (*f*), and perished before the
 walls of Camicus.

It is evident that these actions but ill be-
 came a just sovereign, who merited to be
 a judge in the shades, and pronounce the ever-
 lasting destiny of the virtuous and the wick-
 ed. We may reasonably conclude, therefore,
 that Minos, the legislator, was a different per-
 son from Minos the conqueror; that it was
 the elder Minos who acquired an immor-
 tal reputation for wisdom and justice; and
 Minos the second, who conquered the great-
 er part of the islands of the Archipelago,

(*f*) Hygin. Fab. 44. Pausanias, in Achaicis.

but who, unable to govern his passions, tarnished his glory by cruelty and revenge.

I shall say nothing, here, Madam, of Pasiphae, Theseus, Ariadne, or the Minotaur. Their history is connected with that of the Labyrinth, and will naturally follow, when I shall have occasion to mention that famous prison, which was the work of Dædalus, and which had nearly become his tomb. Before I conclude this letter, however, I shall add a few words concerning Idomeneus, the last king of Crete.

I have said, that this prince, accompanied by Merion (*g*), conducted eighty vessels to the assistance of Agamemnon. Homer has immortalized the exploits by which he distinguished himself before the walls of Troy. At his departure, he committed the government of his states to Leucus (*b*) his adopted son, and promised him the hand of his daughter Clisithera in marriage, if he ruled with wisdom during his absence.

This ambitious youth soon forgot the favours that had been lavished on him. Having

(*g*) This Merion was the son of Molus, uncle of Idomeneus.

(*b*) Quintus Smyrneus.

gained

gained a great number of partizans, he aspired to the crown, nor would his impatience allow him to wait till a legitimate marriage placed it on his head. Finding the king was long in returning, and flattering himself, perhaps, that he would fall in battle, he resolved to mount the throne. Mida (*i*), the wife of Idomeneus, and the princess Clisithera, were impediments to his project. But ambition knows no bounds, and hesitates not to violate the most sacred laws. The usurper having seduced the people, and gained over some of the principal persons, murdered these unhappy victims in the temple; and when Idomeneus, crowned with laurels, landed on the coast of Crete, Leucus, who made all around him tremble at his power, pursued him with an army, and forced him to return to his ships. I know indeed that the flight of Idomeneus is differently related. Servius (*k*) says, that he had vowed, in a storm, to sacrifice to the Gods whatever he should first meet, on his arrival on the coast; that his son being the first, he slew

(*i*) Johannes Tzetzes.

(*k*) Servius, in Eneid. lib. iii.

him;

him (*l*); and a plague happening immediately after, the inhabitants considered this calamity as the consequence of divine vengeance, and expelled the murderous father; who left Crete, and founded Salentum on the coast of Messapia (*m*). This opinion seems to me destitute of foundation. History does not inform us that Idomeneus had a son. If he had male offspring of his own blood, why should he have adopted Leucus? Or why have committed to him the government of the island, with a promise of his daughter's hand? I should rather be inclined to think, that he brought the plague with him in his ships, from the siege of Troy, as Herodotus asserts (*n*), and that Leucus artfully availed himself of this pretext to procure the banishment of his lawful sovereign. It should seem, however, as if the usurper did not long

(*l*) Fenelon has followed this tradition, in his immortal work, which has done so much honour to France.

(*m*) Virgil, *Eneid*, lib. iii. It is said, the hero Idomeneus, driven from the throne of his ancestors, has fled far from his country.—Idomeneus of Lycos (a city of Crete) covers with his troops the fields of Salentum.

(*n*) Herodotus. lib. vii.

enjoy

enjoy the fruit of his crimes; for, immediately after the departure of Idomeneus, we find the monarchy at an end, and the government become republican.

I have the honour to be, &c.

M

LET-

L E T T E R XIX.

To M. L. M.

IT now remains for me, Madam, to give you some account of the republic of Crete, which has been honoured with the eulogium of Plato; which Lycurgus took for his model (*o*) in the institutions he framed for Lacedæmon, and which was admired and celebrated through all Greece: Strabo

(*o*) "Lycurgus, retiring into Crete, sought the friendship of Thales, the poet and legislator; from him he learnt the metrical rhythmus in which Rhadamanthus and Minos delivered the laws they professed to have received from Jupiter. He next travelled into Egypt, and studied the institutions of that people. Some add, that he repaired to Chio, where he conversed with Homer. On his return to his country, he found his nephew Charilaus on the throne, and then employed himself in forming his new code of laws; but, previous to their publication, went to pass some time at Delphi, after which he declared he had received them from Apollo. . . . The laws of Lycurgus are entirely similar to those of Crete." Strabo. lib. x.

has

has thought an account of it not unworthy his pen, and has preserved its leading features in his immortal work. You will, doubtless, be struck with their singularity. You will discover a prodigious difference between the principles on which this ancient republic was founded, and those of the greatest part of modern governments. But you will see with pleasure a legislation whose sole object it was to sow the seeds of virtue in the heart of infancy, and to nourish them in youth ; to inspire into the ripened man the love of his country, of glory and of liberty, and to console old age by the esteem and reverence due to its wisdom and experience ; you will find all its institutes directed to form faithful friends, patriotic citizens, and wise statesmen. Do not imagine a multitude of laws and edicts were necessary to procure these inestimable advantages. They naturally flowed from one single source ; the public education of youth under wise regulations.

The examples placed before the Cretans in their early years, the virtues to which they were witnesses, the memorable deeds which they heard recited, and the applauses bestowed on them, the honours which rewarded courage and noble actions, and the shame and opprobrium

which stigmatized vice, were the only springs set in motion by their legislator, to render them a warlike, virtuous, and wise nation. I will be bold to add, that the same regulations, founded, as they were, on a just knowledge of the human heart, would have the same happy effect on the morals of a people under every form of government; but morals are what modern governments are least solicitous concerning; our cold politics despise them, and condemn the man who dares to proclaim their importance. Taxes are levied on the depravation of manners; and the corrupt politician, instead of promoting what constitutes the true happiness of a nation, is wholly occupied in increasing the wealth and power of kings.

The government of Crete, immediately after the flight of Idomeneus, became aristocratical. The people still possessed a share of the power; but as the nobles were in possession of the principal employments, they had, by consequence, the greatest weight in the administration of affairs (*p*). Ten magistrates were annually chosen in a national assembly, by the plurality of voices, who were called *Cosmi*,

(*p*) Plutarch. in Dione.

and

and whose office was the same with that of the Ephori at Sparta (*q*). They had the management of war, and all the most important public business (*r*). They possessed the right of choosing counsellors from among the old men; and these, in number twenty-eight, composed the senate of Crete (*s*), and were chosen from among those who had passed the office of Cosmi (*t*), or persons eminently distinguished by their merit, and unimpeached integrity. These senators held their dignity for life; great deference was paid to their opinion, and nothing finally determined without consulting them. The wisdom of the legislator had intended them for a counterpoise to the ambition of the ten chiefs, whose power was still farther circumscribed by limiting the duration of their magistracy to one year.

(*q*) Aristot. Polit. lib. ii. The Ephori have the same authority with the Cretan magistrates, called Cosmi; only the former are limited to five, and the Cosmi are ten in number.

(*r*) Aristot. Polit. lib. ii.

(*s*) Hesychius. "At Lacedæmon, at Carthage, and "in Crete, the college of old men is called Geronia." It was composed of twenty-eight senators.

(*t*) Strabo, lib. x.

His

His precaution did not end here; as the votes of the people might be improperly obtained, and their choice consequently fall upon a person unworthy of so honourable a post; he very wisely provided, that whoever should disgrace the dignity of the Cōsmi might be removed, either in an assembly of the people, or by his colleagues only (u). So excellent a constitution caused Plato to say (v), “The republic, which approaches too much to a monarchy, and that which admits too unrestrained a liberty, are equally remote from the just medium. O Cretans! O Lacedæmonians! ye have avoided these two rocks, and established your states on the most solid foundations.”

From what I have said, Madam, concerning the Cretan form of government, you will perceive that nothing was more simple. A free people, conscious they were unable to govern themselves, name magistrates, into whose hands they transfer their authority; these chiefs, invested with regal power, elect senators to aid them with their

(u) Aristotle.

(v) Plato, de Legibus, lib. iii.

counfels, which counfellors again can decide nothing of themselves; but their office is perpetual, which increafes the refpect paid them, and enables them to extend their knowledge and information. The chiefs of the republic have a powerful motive to incite them to act worthy the honourable ftation in which they are placed, as, on the one hand, they are checked by the fear of difgrace, and on the other encouraged by the hope of one day becoming members of the national council.

Let us now examine the means employed by the legiflator to form the manners of the citizens. All the Cretans were fubject to their magiftrates, and divided into two claffes, that of the youths, and that of the men of mature age (*x*). The former confifted of young men who had attained their feventeenth year, and the fecond of men of riper age (*y*). The

(*x*) The firft clafs were called Andreia, and answered to the Pheidicia of the Lacedæmonians. Thefe two names were alfo given to the public places where the Cretans and Spartans made their repafts in common, and where they difcourfed of affairs of ftate; anciently, thefe afsemblies were named, even at Lacedæmon, Andreia. Aristotle.

(*y*) The fecond clafs were called Agelas (company). This name was given alfo to the buildings where the youths met together to take their repafts in public.

society of men made their repasts in common, in certain public edifices, where the chief, the magistrate, the poor, and the rich, seated together, all eat and drank alike; a vessel filled with wine and water (z), which was passed from one to the other, was the only drink for the whole company, and the aged men alone had the privilege of demanding an addition of wine. The Cretans were certainly too wise to be unacquainted with the power of beauty, as a woman presided at each table (a), who took publicly the best of every thing, and distributed it to those who had signalized themselves by their courage in battle, or their wisdom in council. This honourable distinction, far from causing jealousy, excited emulation in every breast, to render themselves worthy of the same reward. Near the place where the citizens assembled (b), two tables, called *the hospitable*, were prepared, to which all travellers and strangers, who presented themselves, were admitted; a particular house was likewise set apart for them, where they might pass the night.

(z) Dosiadas.

(a) Dosiadas.

(b) Dosiadas. Eustathius.

To

To provide for the expences of the state, every citizen was obliged to bring into the common stock the tenth part of his revenues; the general distribution of which was vested in the prefects of the cities. "In Crete," says Aristotle, "a certain part of the fruits of the earth, the flocks, the revenues of the state, and the imposts is consecrated to the Gods, and the rest distributed to the different classes into which the inhabitants are divided; so that men, women, and children, are maintained at the public expence."

(c) After dinner, the chiefs were accustomed to converse together, and to consult on the affairs of the republic; they then recounted heroic actions performed in battle; celebrated the courage of the most illustrious of their warriors, and exhorted the young men to valour. (d) These assemblies were the first school of infancy. At seven years old, the bow was put into the hands of the Cretan youth, who from that

(c) Dosiadas.

(d) Eustathius (in Odyss.) says, the Cretans after dinner consulted on public affairs: They afterwards discoursed of war, celebrated the exploits of their warriors, and exhorted the young men to imitate their heroic actions.

moment.

moment was received into the society of the men, which he did not quit before the age of seventeen. There, seated on the ground, and clad in a simple garment which served him the whole year, he attended on the old men, and listened in silence to their counsels; his youthful heart took fire at the recital of high deeds of arms, and he ardently panted to atchieve the like. (e) He became habituated to sobriety and temperance; and having incessantly before his eyes examples of moderation, wisdom, and patriotism, the seeds of every virtue were implanted in him, even before he knew the use of reason.

He was early inured to arms and to fatigue (f), that he might be able to endure heat and cold, to climb mountains and precipices, and bear with resolution the blows and wounds he might receive in the gymnasia, or in battle. But his education was not confined to the gymnastic exercises; he was taught to sing, in a peculiar kind of air (g), the laws written

(e) Strabo, lib. x.

(f) Strabo, lib. x. The laws of Crete, says Cicero, exercised the youth in hunting, running, and supporting heat and cold, hunger and thirst.

(g) Strabo, lib. x. says, that the laws of Crete were written in verse, the measure of which was very confined.

in verse, that the pleasure of music might impress them more deeply on his memory, and prevent him from pleading ignorance, should he offend against them: he next learned hymns in honour of the Gods, and poems composed in the praise of their heroes. When he had attained his seventeenth year, he quitted the society of the men, and entered into the class of the youth.

The education of these continued on the same plan; they exercised themselves in hunting, wrestling, and fighting with their companions, while martial airs were played on the lyre (*b*), and they were obliged to observe exact time. These exercises were not always without danger, as iron weapons were sometimes made use of (*i*). But the Pyrrhic dance, invented in Crete (*k*), was that in which the youth were most ambitious to excel; the dancers wore the warlike dress, which was

(*b*) Athenæus, lib. xii. The Lacedæmonians charge the enemy to the sound of the flute; the Cretans to that of the lyre.

(*i*) Strabo, lib. x.

(*k*) Diodorus, lib. v. Dionysius Halicarnass. lib. vii. Pliny, lib. vii. cap. 56. Strabo, lib. x. says, that this dance was invented in Crete. Nicholas Damascenus says that the inventor of it was Pyrrhicus of Cydon.

a short

a short and light loose jacket, that descended only to the knee, and was fastened with a girdle that went twice round the waist; they wore also the buskin, were completely armed, and imitated various military evolutions to the sound of instruments. "The Lacedæmonians and Cretans," says Libanius (*l*), "cultivated dancing with the utmost ardour; they considered it as a necessary exercise enjoined by the laws; and it was almost as dishonourable to neglect it, as to quit their post in the day of battle."

(*m*) The opulent Cretans, and those of an illustrious birth, were permitted to form societies of young men of their own age, and among these the contention was, who should have the most numerous company. In general, the father of the young man who had collected them was their chief; he was to instruct these warlike youths, to exercise them in running and hunting, and to bestow rewards, or inflict punishments.

(*l*) Liban. Orat. pro Saltatoribus.

(*m*) Strabo, lib. x. These companies, as I have said, were called Agelas.

Friend-

Friendship was highly honoured among the Cretans; "But," says Strabo (*n*), "their manner of loving is very extraordinary. Instead of gentle persuasion, they employ violence to gain friends. He who has a secret passion for a young man of his own age, and is desirous of attaching him by indissoluble ties, forms the project of carrying him off; which he imparts to his companions three or four days before he intends to execute it. The latter can neither conceal him, nor hinder him from going out, as that would seem to imply in them an avowal that he did not merit such excess of love. On the day appointed they meet together, and if the ravisher appears to them to possess equal or superior merit to his favourite, they at first pretend to oppose the intended violence, in compliance with the law; but afterwards favour it with joy: if, on the contrary, they do not judge him worthy of the choice he has made, they prevent him from executing his design. This pretended resistance continues until the young man has conducted his prize to the assembly of which he

(*n*) Strabo, lib. x.

“ is a member. They do not consider him
“ as the most amiable who surpasses others in
“ beauty, but him who is most distinguished
“ by modesty and bravery.

“ The ravisher loads his young friend
“ with favours, and accompanies him where-
“ ever he desires; he is followed by those
“ who have favoured the enterprize, and
“ conducts him from festival to festival, pro-
“ cures him the pleasures of the chase and
“ good cheer, and, after endeavouring for
“ two months to win his heart by every
“ possible means, he brings him back to the
“ city, and is obliged to restore him to his
“ parents. But, previous to this, he presents
“ him with a warrior's dress, an ox, and a
“ vase, which are the customary and pre-
“ scribed gifts. Sometimes his generosity ex-
“ tends still further, and he bestows on him
“ sumptuous presents, to the expence of
“ which his companions contribute. The
“ youth then sacrifices the ox to Jupi-
“ ter, and gives an entertainment to those
“ who assisted in carrying him off. He de-
“ clares whether he will accept the friend-
“ ship of him who has been at so much trou-
“ ble to gain his esteem; and if he has reason
“ to

“ to complain of any part of his conduct, he
 “ is at liberty to renounce a friend unworthy
 “ of the name, and to demand his punish-
 “ ment.

“ It would be disgraceful,” adds Strabo,
 “ for a handsome young man, of illustrious
 “ birth, to be without a friend, as the fault
 “ would be imputed to his morals. They who
 “ have been carried off receive public honours.
 “ They have the privilege of the first places
 “ in the public assemblies, and are allowed to
 “ wear the dress they owe to affection and
 “ esteem, during the remainder of their lives ;
 “ which distinctive mark is a public proof
 “ they have enjoyed a friendship esteemed so
 “ honourable.

“ When the young men had completed their
 “ exercises, and attained the age appointed by
 “ the laws, they entered into the class of men
 “ of mature age. Being now become members
 “ of society, they had the right of voting in
 “ the national assemblies, and might be ad-
 “ vanced to all the employments of the repub-
 “ lic. At this period they were obliged to
 “ marry ; but before they brought home their
 “ wives, they waited till they were qualified
 “ to manage a family.” Such, Madam, were
 the

the leading features of the Cretan government.

“ The legislator,” says Strabo, “ justly considered liberty as the greatest blessing cities can possess; since that alone secures the property of the citizens, of which slavery is the certain destruction. The slave possesses no property, not even that of his person. It is incumbent on all men, therefore, to preserve their liberty, the surest foundation of which is concord; and we see it every where flourish, when the seeds of dissension are destroyed. Discord almost always originates in the thirst of riches, and the love of luxury. If for these we substitute frugality, moderation and equality, we shall eradicate envy, hatred, injustice, and the passions most injurious to society.”

This is precisely what the Cretan legislator effected; and hence that wealthy, prosperous and powerful republic received such well-deserved encomiums from the most celebrated philosophers of Greece. But the greatest honour to Crete was, that her laws furnished Lycurgus with the model of those institutions which he established at Lacedæmon.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T-

L E T T E R XX.

To M. L. M.

THE republic of Crete, which, as you have seen, Madam, was as ancient as the siege of Troy, still flourished in the time of Julius Cæsar. We know of no other of so long continuance. The legislator, founding the happiness of the Cretans on liberty, gave them laws and institutions fitted to form men capable of defending their freedom (*o*). All the citizens were soldiers (*p*), and all exercised and expert in the art of war: for we even find that foreigners resorted to Crete, to be instructed in that art. “Philopœmen,” says Plutarch (*q*), “not enduring to remain inactive, and ardently desirous of acquiring knowledge in the profession of arms, embarked for Crete; where having exercised himself among that

(*o*) Aristot. Polit. lib. vii. In Crete the greater part of the laws had relation to war.

(*p*) Plato, de Legibus, lib. i. The Cretan legislator framed both his public and private laws to have a reference to war, because victory assured to the victors the property of the vanquished.

(*q*) Plutarch, in Vita Philopœm.

N

“warlike

“ warlike people, well versed in every military art, and accustomed to lead a frugal and austere life, he returned to the Achæans, and so much distinguished himself by the knowledge he had acquired, that he was immediately appointed general of the cavalry.”

On the other hand, the legislator, persuaded that conquests were usually only acts of violence, and injustice, which frequently enfeebled, and almost always corrupted the morals of the victorious nation, endeavoured to prevent the Cretans from endeavouring to subdue foreign countries. The abundant productions of their island were sufficient to supply every real want, and they had no need of foreign riches, which, together with commerce, would have introduced luxury, and all its attendant vices. He knew how to inspire his nation with a disregard for these superfluities, without expressly forbidding them. The gymnastic exercises, which furnished sufficient employment for the leisure of ardent youth; the pleasures of the chase, to which they were much addicted; friendship, which he had taught them to revere as a divinity; the public shows, where all the different classes of

of society met together, and to which the women were admitted (*r*) ; the love of equality, regularity, and their country, with which all hearts were inflamed ; and the wise institutions, which rendered the whole nation but a single family ; all conspired to attach the Cretans to their island, on which they found the utmost happiness they could wish, without entertaining any desire to seek abroad an imaginary glory, or subject other nations to their power. From the time the government of this country first became republican, till it was attacked by the Romans, we never find the Cretans to have attempted any foreign invasion ; an honour reserved exclusively to them among all the people celebrated in history. Individuals, indeed, might serve in the armies of other states : the kings and princes of which, knowing their bravery and skill in archery, strove who should first induce them to enter into their pay, as each was desirous of having in his army a body of Cretan bowmen, since the whole world could not produce any more expert (*s*). “ The arrows of Gortyna,” says Claudian,

(*r*) Plutarch, in Vita Thesei.

(*s*) Claudian, Plutarch. in Pyrrh. Pausanias in Mene-
N 2 nestiacis,

Claudian, "happily directed, carry certain wounds, and never miss their aim."

But though the numerous and flourishing cities of Crete did not unite to enslave the neighbouring islands, by drenching them with the blood of their inhabitants, they were not wise enough to preserve peace among themselves. The torch of discord was frequently lighted. The most powerful wished to rule over the others. Cnossus and Gortyna, sometimes in alliance, attacked and subjugated the neighbouring cities, and sometimes making war on each other, saw the bravest of their youth perish in these civil contests. Lycos and Cydon opposed an unshaken barrier to their ambition, and preserved their liberty. The latter had obtained such power (*t*), as to be able to turn the scale in favour of whichever side it declared. These civil wars occasioned the ruin of many cities, and deluged with blood the country of Jupiter.

To what must we attribute these intestine dissensions? One part of the island was occu-

ned by the Cretans, attest the skill of the Cretans in the art of shooting arrows, and that foreign princes were very desirous to form bodies of archers, consisting entirely of that nation.

(*t*) Strabo, lib. x.

pied

pied by the Eteocretans, or native inhabitants, among whom were settled colonies from Athens, Sparta, Argos, and Samos (*u*), who possibly still retained in their hearts the seeds of ancient animosity, and their inveterate hatreds only waited a favourable opportunity to ripen into open violence and revenge. Perhaps too, the strongest, confiding in their superiority, were tempted to avail themselves of their power, and substituted force for right; nor are we to forget that the Cretan youth, trained to military exercises from their infancy, were ever ready to betake themselves to arms. These probably are the reasons which so often hurried to the combat, a people subject to the same laws, the same customs, and the same religion. Be this as it may, the Cretans, convinced that victory depended on the unanimity of their troops, magnificently adorned the most beautiful young men of the army; and made them sacrifice to friendship, before they engaged in battle (*v*). There are countries where, on like occasions, the commanders

(*u*) Herodot. lib. iii. says, the Samians, who built Cydon, erected temples there, among which was that of Dictynna.

(*v*) Athenæus, lib. xiii,

ought to be obliged to sacrifice to Concord; and if their sacrifice were sincere, it would at once redound to their own glory, and prevent rivers of human blood from being shed to no purpose to the state.

The love of war did not extinguish in the hearts of the Cretans that exquisite sensibility which made them cultivate and encourage the fine arts. "The Cretans," says Sozomen (x), "displayed their munificence to Homer, by giving him a thousand crowns; and glorying in a generosity not to be surpassed, preserved the memory of their donation by a public inscription." In Crete, adds Ptolemy (y), men are still more anxious to cultivate their minds, than to exercise their bodies. Therefore, when discord reigned among them, the voice of wisdom, and the charms of poetry, brought them back to reason. Thales of Gortyna (z), the instructor of Lycurgus, was one of their most celebrated philosophers, poets, and legislators; and he

(x) Sozomen. Hist. Eccles. in Pref.

(y) Ptolem. in Tetrab. lib. ii.

(z) Pausanias, in Atticis, says, that this Thales was of Gortyna. Diogenes Laertius asserts, that he lived in the time of Lycurgus and Homer. Strabo, lib. x. seems to confirm this opinion.

successfully

successfully applied his knowledge and talents
 to restore concord to his fellow citizens (a).
 " His poetry consisted of discourses in verse,
 " exhorting the people to unanimity and obe-
 " dience to their superiors; he possessed the
 " art of conveying in the most harmonious
 " metre, the most solid and beneficial instruc-
 " tion. So great was the effect of his poetry,
 " that his hearers, who found their under-
 " standing, heart, and ears, equally persuaded
 " and charmed, gradually suffered all their
 " animosity to subside; and enamoured with
 " the blessings of peace, which he painted in
 " the most lively colours, forgot their intestine
 " hatreds, and ranged themselves under the
 " standard of concord." It is said that this
 sage invented the arts appropriated to the mili-
 tary dances, and the Cretan Pyrrhic (b). Men,

(a) Plutarch, in Vita Lycurg.

(b) The Scholiast on Pindar (Pyth. Od. 2.) says that
 these dances were instituted by the Curetes. Strabo (lib. x.)
 is of the same opinion; he adds, however, that Thales in-
 vented the Cretan Rhythmus. Nicholas Damascenus, and
 Marius Plotius (de Metris), attribute the invention of the
 armed Pyrrhic to Pyrrhicus of Cydon. May we not recon-
 cile these authors by supposing the Curetes to have been the
 first institutors of the military dances; that Pyrrhicus in-
 vented

over whom poetry and music had such power, could not be enemies to pleasure; and we accordingly find it to have been a custom with them to mark their happy days by white stones and their unhappy ones with black (c). At the end of the year, they examined the number of these stones, and only esteemed themselves to have lived the days denoted by the white ones, as they estimated the length of life only by its enjoyments. Hence the inscription frequent on their tombs: *He lived, so many days; he existed, so many.*

In minds of sensibility and generosity, a love of glory is easily awakened. The Grecians resorted to all the celebrated solemnities of Greece, and bore away the palm in the Olympic, Nemean, and Pythian games (d); others, who were favourites of the Muses, turned into heroic verse the oracles of the prophets, and composed poems to celebrate the great deeds of heroes (e). Several distinguished

vented that particular one which bore his name, and that Thales composed the airs, or adapted new music to them.

(c) Cornutus, on the second Satire of Persius.

(d) Such as Ergoteles of Cnossus, celebrated by Pindar, Ode xii.

(e) Jophon of Cnossus put into heroic verse the oracles
of

guished themselves as historians (*f*). It is said, that the most ancient contest was that in which a prize was proposed to the poet who best should sing a hymn to Apollo, and in which the victory was adjudged to Chrysothemis of Crete (*g*).

Time, however, has annihilated almost all their works; and if Pindar had not immortalised some of those Cretans who were victors in the Grecian games, we should not at present even know their names. The temple of Diana, at Ephesus, built by Ctesiphon, and his son Metagenes, both Cretans, has not proved more durable (*h*). This noble building was of the Ionic order (*i*); and to the beauty of

of the Prophets. Pausanias.—Rhianus of Bena wrote several books in verse, and composed several poems. Stephanus.

(*f*) Dictys of Cnossus accompanied Idomeneus into Troas, and wrote the history of that famous siege which Homer has rendered so celebrated. Joannes Tzetzes.—Lucillus of Tarrha wrote a commentary on the history of the Argonauts, &c.

(*g*) Pausanias, in Phocicis.

(*h*) Pliny, lib. vii. cap. 37. Ctesiphon of Cnossus was celebrated for the admirable skill he displayed in building the temple of Diana at Ephesus.

(*i*) Vitruvius, lib. ii.

the

the marble; the elegance of the architecture, the majesty of the edifice, and the inimitable perfection of the whole, was added a solidity which alone could add value to so grand a design. The names of the artists who built it have descended to posterity, though the marbles, columns, and ornaments, which rendered them immortal, have been dispersed or destroyed, leaving scarcely the slightest trace remaining of one of the seven wonders of the world.

Nations pass away from off the earth, like the monuments of their power, and after a few centuries, with difficulty can we discover, in their descendants, the vestiges of their ancient character. Some subsist longer than others, and we are able almost always to calculate their duration by the wisdom of their laws, and the fidelity with which they are observed. The republic of Crete, established on the solidest foundations, for ten centuries knew no foreign master, and bravely repelled the attacks of every foreign prince who attempted to enslave her. But at length the fatal period arrived when the Romans, elated with their victories, and proud of their power, aspired to the empire of the world, and would no longer

longer admit of any distinction among the surrounding nations, but that of slaves or subjects (*k*). Florus does not dissemble that ambition, and the desire of subjecting the famous country of Jupiter, were the only motives which induced the Romans to attack Crete. "Should we inquire into the real cause of the Cretan war," says he, "it must be confessed, it was entered into only from the desire of subjugating that celebrated island; Crete was supposed to have favoured Mithridates, and Rome revenged the pretended insult, by declaring war against her. Marcus Antonius (*l*) (the father of the triumvir) failed on this expedition, persuaded he should make an easy conquest; but his meanness and presumption met with deserved punishment. The enemy cut off the greater part of his fleet, and hung up their prisoners to the masts; after which they returned triumphant into their harbours."

Rome never forgave a defeat. No sooner

(*k*) Florus, lib. iii.

(*l*) Marcus Antonius was appointed to guard all the maritime coasts of the Roman empire. He perished in Crete, where he lost his honour.

was the Macedonian war ended, then she armed for vengeance, and sent Quintus Metellus with a formidable armament against Crete (*m*). He met, however, with a very obstinate resistance. Panarus and Lathenes, two experienced commanders, having assembled twenty thousand men, of determined courage, and ardent in the cause of their country, withstood for three successive years the arms of the Romans; who were not able to gain possession of the island, till they had destroyed its bravest warriors. They lost there a great number of men, and with the utmost difficulty obtained a bloody victory. The fortune of Rome, at length, triumphed, and the first care of the conqueror was, to abolish the laws of Minos (*n*), and substitute those of Numa. The sensible and judicious Strabo (*o*) complains of this severity, and says, that in his time the Cretan institutions were no longer observed, because the Romans had compelled the conquered provinces to adopt their laws. Still more effectually to secure to themselves

(*m*) Velleius Paterculus, lib. ii.

(*n*) Paulus Diaconus, Hist. Misc. lib. vi.

(*o*) Strabo, lib. x.

the possession of the island, they sent a numerous colony to Cnossus (*p*).

From that period to the present time, Madam, that is to say, during a space of nineteen hundred years, the Cretans have ceased to be a nation, and have gradually lost their courage, their virtues, their sciences, and their arts. This deplorable debasement can only be attributed to the extinction of their liberty. So true is it, that man is born for liberty, and that, deprived of this support, which he has received from nature to sustain his weakness, his genius expires, and his courage languishes, till he sinks to the lowest point of degradation.

(*q*) The island of Crete, together with the little kingdom of Cyrene on the coast of Lybia, composed a Roman province, which at first was governed by a Proconsul, afterwards by a Questor and an Assessor (*r*); and, at length, as we learn from Suetonius, by a Consul (*s*). This island was one of the first which received the light of the Gospel. The Christian faith

(*p*) Idem, *ibid*.

(*q*) Idem, lib. xvii.

(*r*) Dion.

(*s*) Suetonius, in Vita Vespasiani.

was planted there by St. Paul; and his disciple Titus, whom he left to bring to perfection the good seed he had sown, was the first bishop. Under the reign of Leo, Crete contained twelve bishoprics (*t*), all subordinate to the patriarch of Constantinople (*u*). Constantine divided the province of Crete and Cyrene in the distribution he made of the empire. Leaving three sons, Constantius, Constantine, and Constans; he gave to the former Thrace and the East; to the second, the kingdom of the West; and to the third, the island of Crete, Africa, and Illyria.

(*v*) When Michael Balbus was in possession of the throne of Constantinople, the revolt of Thomas, which continued three years, caused him to neglect the other parts of the empire. The Agarenians, an Arab nation, who had conquered the finest provinces of Spain, took advantage of this opportunity, to fit out a considerable fleet, and, after having pillaged the Cy-

(*t*) These bishoprics ranked in the following order, as we see in the Novel of the Emperor Leo: *Gortyna, Cnossus, Arcadia, Cherronesus, Aulopotamos, Agrium, Lampa, Cydonia, Hiera, Petra, Sitea, Cissamo.*

(*u*) Zozim. lib. ii.

(*v*) Constant. Porphyrogenit. de administrando Imperio, cap. xii.

clades,

clades, they attacked the island of Crete, where they established themselves almost without resistance. To secure their conquests, they built a fortress, which they called *Khandak* (i. e. an intrenchment), and which name by the Venetians was softened into *Candia*. From this citadel the Barbarians made incursions into every part of the island, spreading terror and desolation wherever they came; and, at length, made themselves masters of all the cities and towns, except Cydon. Michael in vain endeavoured to drive them from the island; nor was the emperor Basilus the Macedonian more fortunate; they defeated him in a bloody battle; but one of his generals, having been more successful, imposed on them a tribute. At the expiration of ten years, the Arabs refused to pay the sum stipulated, and it was reserved to Nicephorus Phocas (x), who afterwards became emperor, to deliver this beautiful island from the yoke of the infidels. He landed there with a numerous army, attacked them with great bravery, and defeated them in several battles; till at length the Saracens, no longer daring to keep the field against this formidable opponent, shut themselves up in

(x) Murtius.

their

their fortresses. Phocas, provided with all the warlike machines necessary for sieges, took their places of strength one after the other, and forced them even in Khandak, their metropolis, and last strong hold. After a campaign of nine months, he entirely reduced the island, made the king Curup, and his lieutenant Anemas, prisoners, and restored to the empire a province which had been in the possession of the infidels during one hundred and twenty-seven years. It remained subject to the emperors of Byzantium till the time of Baldwin earl of Flanders, who, raised to their throne, magnificently rewarded Boniface, marquis of Montferrat, for the succours he brought him, by creating him king of Thessalonica, and adding the island of Crete to his dominions. By this nobleman, who was more greedy after wealth than ambitious of glory, it was sold to the Venetians in 1194 (y).

Under the wise laws of this great republic, Crete again began to revive. The people enjoyed the blessings of a mild government, and, encouraged by their masters, applied themselves to commerce and agriculture. Travel-

(y) La Guerra Cretense.

lers

lers received from the Venetian governors every assistance they could desire, for extending and perfecting inquiries beneficial to mankind. Belon, the naturalist, speaks, in terms of the highest gratitude and commendation, of the services rendered him by them, and gives an interesting description of the flourishing state of the country through which he travelled.

The seat of government was established at Candia, where the magistrates and members of the council resided. The supreme authority was vested in the Proveditor General, whose power extended over the whole kingdom.

Venice had been in the possession of Crete during five centuries and a half, when, at the time that Gornaro occupied the most important post, the storm began to gather on the side of Constantinople. The Turks, for a whole year, had been assembling a prodigious armament, and deceived the Bailli by assuring him it was intended against Malta. But in 1645, in the midst of profound peace, they suddenly invaded Crete with a fleet of four hundred sail, having on board sixty thousand soldiers,

diers, under the command of four Pachas (z). The Emperor Ibrahim, who gave orders for this expedition, had no plea for undertaking it. He, however, had recourse to the usual arts of eastern perfidy. To impose upon the Venetian Senate, he loaded their ambassadors with presents; ordered his fleet to proceed as far as Cape Matagan, as if quitting the Archipelago, and positively assured the governors of Tine and Cerigne, that the republic had nothing to fear for her possessions; yet, at the very moment the Porte was making these protestations, the fleet sailed into the gulph of Canea, and passing between that place and Saint Theodore, proceeded to form a landing below the river of Platania. Such indeed has ever been the manner in which the Turks have acted towards the people they wished to subjugate. Fraud and force are the two means they employ to accomplish their designs; but the time is certainly not far distant, when

(z) The Captain Pacha, by birth a Croat, who commanded the fleet; the Pacha who commanded by land, and was to conduct the siege; Hassian Pacha, Beglier Bey of Romelia, who was the first that entered the walls of Babylon; and Amurat Pacha, Aga of the Janissaries.

they

they will be compelled to restore their unjust conquests.

The Venetians, not expecting this sudden invasion, had made no preparations for defence, and the Turks landed without the least resistance. The little island of St. Theodore is but a league and a half from Canea, and only three quarters of a league in circumference. Here the Venetians had erected two forts, one called Turluru, on the top of the steepest cliff, and the other named St. Theodore, lower down. It was of the utmost importance for the invaders to possess themselves of this rock, which might have greatly incommoded their ships. They lost no time, therefore, in commencing the attack, which they carried on with vigour. The former of these fortresses had neither cannon nor soldiers, and was taken without firing a gun. The second had only a garrison of sixty men, but they defended themselves to the last extremity; and when the Turks entered it, they found only ten soldiers remaining, whose heads were barbarously struck off by order of the Captain Pacha.

Masters of this important post, as well as of the Lazaret, a rock situated half a league

from Canea, the Turks blockaded the city by sea, and surrounded it with lines of circumvallation by land. General Cornaro was thunder-struck, on learning that the enemy had made a descent. The whole island contained only a body of three thousand five hundred infantry, and a small number of horse; and he knew that the besieged town had only a thousand regular troops for its defence, and a few citizens able to bear arms. He sent instant advice of his distress to Venice, and took his post at the harbour, that he might be more at hand to succour the besieged. He threw about two hundred and fifty men into the town, before the enemy could get their lines completed, and often attempted, but in vain, to introduce new reinforcements. The Turks approaching the body of the place, had carried a half moon, which covered the gate of Retimo; and availing themselves of their numerous artillery, continued daily to batter the wall in breach. The besieged bravely returned their fire, and made them pay dearly for a few doubtful successes. General Cornaro endeavoured to arm the Greeks, and especially the Spachiots, who boasted of their bravery. He formed a battalion of them; but their days
of

of prowess were no more: the moment they saw the enemy, and heard the thunder of the artillery, they shamefully took to flight, nor was it possible to make a single man of them stand fire. While the Senate of Venice were deliberating on the means of saving Candia, and busied in fitting out a fleet, the Mahometan generals lavished the blood of their foldiers, to bring their enterprize to a glorious termination: they had already lost twenty thousand warriors in the different engagements; but they had descended into the fosses, and dug under the ramparts those frightful cavities, in which the powder confined bursts with an horrible explosion, and overturns forts of the greatest solidity. They played off one of these mines under the bastion of St. Demetrius, which blew up a great part of the wall, and swallowed all its defenders. The assailants instantly mounted the breach, sabre in hand, and, profiting by the general consternation, made themselves masters of that post. The besieged, recovered from their fright, fell upon them with unexampled intrepidity. About four hundred Venetians rushed on two thousand Turks, already in possession of the wall, and pushed them with

with so much ardour and obstinacy, as to make prodigious slaughter, and force the remainder into the ditches. In this extremity every body fought; the monks carried the musket; women, forgetting the delicacy of their sex, appeared in the midst of the defendants, either to assist in supplying them with arms, or to wield them themselves against the enemy; and several of these glorious heroines lost their lives.

During fifty days the place held out against the whole forces of the Turks; and even at the last moment, if the Venetians had sent a fleet to its succour, the kingdom of Candia would have been saved. They could not, undoubtedly, be ignorant of the following fact: The north wind blows full into the gulph of Canea, and when strong, the sea runs very high. It is then impossible for any squadron, however numerous, to form in line of battle to wait an enemy. Had the Venetians set sail from Cerigne with this favourable wind, they would have reached Canea in five hours, and entered the harbour in full sail, without firing a shot, or the possibility of being opposed by a single Turkish vessel, which could not move without endangering their safety on the coast, and

and dashing to pieces on the surrounding shoals. Instead of executing such a plan, suggested by the very nature of the situation, they sent a few galleys, which not daring to double Cape Spada, coasted along the southern shore of the island, and failed of effecting the purpose intended.

The garrison of Canea, despairing of succours which had been long delayed, seeing three breaches open, by which the infidels might easily mount to the assault, overcome with fatigue, and covered with wounds, reduced to five hundred men, whom it was necessary to disperse over walls of half a league's circumference, every where undermined, at length demanded a capitulation. They obtained the most honourable conditions; and after two months glorious defence, which cost the Turks five and twenty thousand men, marched out of the place with all the honours of war. The citizens who did not choose to remain had permission to withdraw; and the Turks, contrary to their custom, executed the convention with tolerable fidelity.

The Venetians, after the capture of Canea, retired to Retimo; and the Captain Pacha proceeded to lay siege to the Castle of La Sude,

Sude, situated at the entrance of the bay, on a rock about a quarter of a league in circumference. He raised batteries, and endeavoured, but without effect, to make a breach in the ramparts. Despairing to carry it by force, he left troops to continue the blockade, and marched towards Retimo. This town, without walls, was defended by a citadel, built on an eminence that commanded the harbour, into which General Cornaro had retired. At the approach of the enemy, he drew his men out of the citadel, and waited for them in the open field. During the action he exposed his person without reserve, and fought in the ranks to encourage his soldiers. A glorious death was the reward of his bravery; but his fall was followed by the loss of Retimo (*a*).

The Turks, by landing fresh troops in the island, introduced the plague, which almost constantly accompanies their armies. This dreadful distemper made a rapid progress from day to day, and, like devouring flame, exterminated the greatest part of the inhabitants (*b*). The remainder, terrified at its ra-

(*a*) Etat général de l'Empire Ottoman, *troisième partie*.

(*b*) Idem.

vages, escaped into the Venetian states, and left the island almost a desert.

In 1646 commenced the siege of Candia, of a much longer duration than that of Troy. Were a fertile and brilliant imagination, like that of Homer, to collect into one poem the extraordinary events of this celebrated siege, posterity would be presented with noble deeds of arms, magnificent scenes, and heroes not inferior to those of the Iliad. Memorable actions are not wanting in the history of nations. Every age produces new ones; but a genius, like that of the father of poetry, does not arise in many ages. It would be inconsistent with my intention, in these letters, to enter into long details. I shall confine myself, therefore, to a cursory description of the principal events which occurred during the siege of Candia. The Turks, in 1648, had made but little progress before that place: they were frequently defeated by the Venetians, and sometimes compelled to retire to Retimo. At this period Ibrahim was solemnly deposed, and his eldest son, only nine years of age, placed on the throne, under the name of Mehemet IV. But the Sultan, in the recesses of his prison, still continuing an object of inquietude

quietude and alarm to the authors of the revolution, he was strangled on the 19th of August of the same year. The young emperor, whose advancement to the throne was thus effected by the murder of his father, was himself, in the end, precipitated from it, to pass the remainder of his days in the obscurity of a dungeon (c). The whole Ottoman history is nothing but one continued tissue of such murders and treasons; but how important are its lessons for all despots!

In 1649, Uffein Pacha, who continued the blockade of Candia, receiving no succours from the Porte, was obliged to raise the siege, and fly to Canea. The Venetians now kept the sea with a strong squadron, and attacked the Turkish fleet in the bay of Smyrna; burnt twelve ships, two gallies, and killed six thousand men. But the infidels, some time after, having found means to land an army in Candia, recommenced with still greater fury the siege of that city, and having gained possession of an advanced work, which greatly incommoded the besieged, reduced them to the necessity of blowing it up.

(c) After a reign of thirty-seven years, Mehemet IV. was deposed, and confined in a prison.

From

From 1650 to 1658, the Venetians, continuing masters of the sea, waited every year for their enemies at the straits of the Dardanelles, and defeated their numerous fleets in four sea-fights, in which they sunk a great number of their caravelles, took many others, and spread consternation to the very walls of Constantinople, which was filled with tumult and disorder. The Grand Signior in dismay, not thinking himself in safety, abandoned his capital with precipitation.

These glorious successes raised the hopes of the Venetians, and depressed the courage of the Turks. They converted the siege of Candia into a blockade, in which they suffered considerable losses. In 1659, the Sultan, to drive the Venetian fleet from the Dardanelles, and secure a free passage for his ships, ordered two new castles to be built at the entrance of the straits. He commanded the Pacha of Cana, to renew the siege of Candia, and make every effort to obtain possession of that important fortress. In the mean time the republic of Venice, profiting by the advantages already gained, made several attempts upon Cana, which city, in 1660, being vigorously pressed, was on the point of surrendering, when

when the Pacha of Rhodes, hastening to its succour, threw into it a reinforcement of two thousand men. He safely doubled the point of Cape Melec, in sight of the Venetian fleet, which, lying becalmed off Cape Spada, was unable to make the smallest motion to give battle to an inferior enemy, and rob him of his conquest.

Kioprule, the son and successor of the Visir of that name, who had so long upheld the declining fortune of the Ottoman empire, knowing that the people murmured loudly at the length of the siege of Candia, and dreading a general revolt, which must have proved fatal to him and to his master, left Constantinople about the end of 1666, at the head of a formidable army. Having eluded the vigilance of the Venetian fleet, which was waiting for him off Canea, he effected his landing at Palio Castro, and formed his lines round Candia. He had under him four Pachas, and the flower of the Ottoman forces. These troops, encouraged by the presence and promises of their commanders, and seconded by a numerous train of artillery, performed prodigies of valour. All the out-works were entirely destroyed, and nothing remained to the besieged but

but a simple line of walls, which, continually shaken by the cannon, were falling into ruins on every side; yet, though it will with difficulty be believed by posterity, they still held out for three years, against the whole forces of the Ottoman empire. At length they were about to capitulate, when the hope of succours, sent from France, again revived their valour, and rendered them invincible. These succours arrived on the 26th of June, 1669, under the command of the Duke de Navailles, who brought with him a great number of French noblemen, who came to try their arms against the Turks.

The day after their arrival the impatient French made a general sally. The Duke de Beaufort, admiral of France, put himself at the head of the forlorn hope. He marched the first against the infidels, and was followed by a numerous body of infantry and cavalry. They rushed headlong upon the enemy, attacked, forced them in their intrenchments, and would have obliged them to abandon their lines and artillery, but for an unforeseen event which checked their courage. In the midst of the action a powder-magazine blew up. The most advanced lost their lives. The
French

French ranks were broken, and several of their leaders, among whom was the Duke de Beaufort, were never seen more. The soldiers took to flight in confusion. The Turks pursued them, and it was with the greatest difficulty that the Duke de Navailles regained the walls of Candia. The French accused the Italians of having betrayed them, by directing them to sally sooner than they should have done, and reembarked, in spite of all the entreaties of the governor. Their departure decided the fate of the city: as only five hundred men remained for its defence. Morosini capitulated with Kiopruli, to whom he gave up the whole island of Crete, excepting Sude, Grabuge, and Spina Longa. The Grand Visir made his entry into Candia on the 4th of October, 1670, and remained there eight months, to repair the fortifications.

The three fortresses, left by treaty to the Venetians, remained long in their possession; but at length fell successively into the hands of the enemy. Thus, after upwards of thirty years war, after sacrificing more than two hundred thousand men, after deluging the island with rivers of Mahometan and Christian blood,

blood, the Porte is at present in undisturbed possession of Candia.

This, Madam, is a feeble sketch of the history of Crete, from the distant ages of antiquity to the present æra. As we are about to make a tour in the island, I shall next speak to you of its commerce, government, population, and whatever I imagine you will think most interesting.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXI.

To M. L. M.

YOU have now, Madam, some acquaintance with the Cretans; I have laid before you a sketch of their history, and we will next proceed to make an excursion into the island they inhabited, and visit its antiquities.

Elated with having been the birth-place of Jupiter, and proud of her hundred cities, Crete long continued more powerful than the other islands of the Mediterranean. At present her glory is eclipsed. Time has not spared a single one of all her cities, of which we see nothing but the ruins. That we are about to quit is the modern capital, and has given its name to the island. As it is situated on the same spot where ancient Heracleum formerly stood, and is the residence of the great officers of the Ottoman government, it merits a particular description.

“ The isle of Dia,” says Strabo (*d*), “ is situated opposite to Heracleum, the sea-port

(*d*) Strabo, lib. x.

“ of

“ of Cnossus. It is only three leagues and a
 “ half distant from the coast.” This descrip-
 tion is exact, and perfectly corresponds with
 the position of Candia, and the distance be-
 tween that city and the isle of Dia, now called
 Standia. The following passage confirms also
 the opinion of those who assert, that the ca-
 pital of Crete is built on the ruins of Hera-
 cleum (*e*). “ Cnossus, situated within land,
 “ at the distance of twenty-five stadia from
 “ the north sea, has for its port Heracleum.”
 Twenty-five stadia are equivalent to a league,
 and it is at this distance from Candia, to the
 south-east, that we find the village of *Cnossou*,
 where the ruins of that once celebrated city are
 still to be seen.

There is no doubt, therefore, that the
 modern Candia, the *Kandabk* of the Arabs,
 now occupies the site of the ancient Hera-
 cleum. You have read, Madam, the princi-
 pal occurrences of the memorable siege this
 city sustained against the whole forces of the
 Ottoman empire. The Turks have repaired
 the ravages of war. The walls, which sur-
 round it, are more than a league in circum-

(*e*) Strabo, lib. x.

ference, well preserved, and defended with deep ditches, but covered by no out-work. It is, however, safe from an attack on the side of the sea, as ships cannot approach for want of water.

Candia is the seat of the Turkish government. The Porte usually sends thither a Pacha with three tails. Here also the principal officers, and different corps of the Ottoman soldiery, are assembled. This city, so rich, populous, and commercial, under the Venetian government, is greatly fallen from its ancient grandeur. The harbour, which is a handsome basin, where ships are sheltered from every wind, is daily filling up, and is now only capable of receiving boats and small vessels, lightened of a part of their cargo. Those freighted by the Turks at Candia are obliged to proceed almost in ballast, to wait for their loading in the ports of Standia, whither it is brought to them in small barks. These difficulties, which the governors do not endeavour to remedy, are very detrimental to commerce, which accordingly has extremely declined.

Candia, greatly embellished by the Venetians,

tians, is divided into strait streets, and decorated with well-built houses, a handsome square, and a magnificent fountain, but contains within its extensive walls only a small number of inhabitants. Several quarters of the town are almost deserted. That of the market is the only one in which we perceive activity or affluence. The Mahometans have converted the greatest part of the Christian temples into mosques. They have left, however, two churches for the Greeks, one for the Armenians, and a synagogue for the Jews. The Capuchins have a small convent, with a chapel, in which the French vice-consul hears mass; for at present he is the only person of that nation who resides at Candia, the French merchants having retired to Canea.

To the west of Canea stretches a chain of mountains, descending from Mount Ida, the point of which forms the promontory of Dion. Before we arrive there, we find on the seashore *Palio Castro*, a name the modern Greeks give to all ancient places. Its situation corresponds with that of Panormus, which lay to the north-west of Heracleum.

The river to the west of Candia was anciently called the Triton, and near its source

Minerva was born of Jupiter (*f*). A little further is the Loaxus; and about a league to the east of the city the river Ceratus flows through a delightful valley, which, according to Strabo, passed at a small distance from Cnossus. Beyond is a river, I imagine to be the Therenus, on whose banks, according to the fables of antiquity, Jupiter celebrated his nuptials with Juno (*g*). In the space of more than half a league, round the walls of Candia, we do not meet with a single tree. The Turks, during the siege, cut them all down, and destroyed the gardens and orchards which environed the town. The country beyond abounds in corn and fruit-trees, and the adjacent hills, covered with vineyards, yield the malmsey of Mount Ida, worthy of a place at the tables of epicures. This wine, little known in France, is

(*f*) Diodorus Siculus, lib. v. Tradition says, likewise, that Minerva was born of Jupiter in the island of Crete, near the sources of the Triton, whence is derived the epithet Tritogenes.

(*g*) Diodorus Siculus, lib. v. It is said, that the nuptials of Jupiter and Juno were celebrated in the district of Cnossus, near the river Therenus. We still see there a temple, where the priests of the country imitate yearly, in a public festival, the ceremonies which tradition says were observed at these nuptials.

perfumed,

perfumed, of a very agreeable flavour, and in high estimation in this country.

To-morrow, Madam, we shall leave Candia. Our company will consist of twelve travellers, among whom are a French vice-consul, a consul, who is to enter on his office at Canea, some young merchants, janissaries, and others who travel from curiosity. We are all armed with muskets, pistols, sabres, and swords. In a country where every thing is decided by force, this mode of travelling is the safest. The Mountaineers and Turks have a great respect for the arms of Frenchmen; and the only method of being under no apprehension from their violence is, to appear well provided with the means of defence. We shall not take the shortest road, as we design to visit the most remarkable places in the island.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXII.

To M. L. M.

LEAVING Candia, Madam, we directed our course towards Gortyna, and soon arrived at the ruins of Cnossus, called by the modern Greeks *Cnossou*. This was the royal city of Minos, who established there the seat of his empire, and there gave those wise and admirable laws so justly boasted by antiquity. This city was a league and a half in circuit (*b*), and long continued one of the most celebrated of the island. United with Gortyna, it gave law to (*i*) almost all Crete; but falling afterwards into misfortunes (*k*), Gortyna and Lycos profited by its decline, and Cnossus was for a time stript of almost all its splendour; but soon repairing these losses, recovered part of its ancient power, and resumed its station among the most flourishing cities of Crete. The Romans, to secure their conquest, established there a numerous colony. At length,

(*b*) Strabo, lib. x.

(*i*) Polybius, lib. iv.

(*k*) Strabo, lib. x.

“ in the thirteenth year of the reign of
 “ Nero (*l*), the whole island suffering by a
 “ violent earthquake, Cnossus was totally de-
 “ stroyed.” (*m*) The lightning, during this
 tremendous calamity, did not proceed from
 the clouds, but from the earth, and the sea
 retreated seven stadia (*n*). Several tombs burst
 open, in one of which was found the work
 of Dictys of Crete, containing the events of
 the Trojan war.

From that time the lofty Cnossus, humbled
 in the dust, has never risen from her ruins, but
 heaps of stones, ancient walls half demolished,
 the remains of edifices, and the name of *Cnos-*
sou, which the spot it stood on still retains,
 enable us to assign, with certainty, its ancient
 situation. These ruins were, no doubt, much
 more considerable before the building of Can-
 dia: because, as they were so near, it may
 well be believed the Venetians made use of
 them, as materials for the ramparts and houses
 of that capital.

Leaving Cnossou on our left, we continued
 our journey. As soon as we had reached the

(*l*) Septimius in Epist. ad Arcad.

(*m*) Philostratus in Vita Apollonii.

(*n*) Suidas.

lofty hills, which range along the foot of Mount Ida, on the east, the country presented the most agreeable prospects. At different distances we discovered vallies clad with verdure, small villages, situated on the banks of rivulets, environed with beautiful orchards, and interspersed here and there with tufts of branching trees, which crowned the hillocks.

We were about four leagues to the south-east of Candia, and employed in climbing a very steep path, when our guides apprised us that we were passing near the *tomb of Jupiter*. We laboured up the mountain to view this ancient monument, but saw nothing but a heap of stones, half eaten away by time, which the inhabitants of the country call the tomb of Jupiter.

Both the fables and histories of antiquity agree that a Jupiter died, and was buried in the island of Crete. The third Jupiter, the son of Saturn (*o*), was born there, and his tomb
is

(*o*) Cicero de Natura Deorum, lib. iii. Arnob. lib. iv. The third Jupiter, son of Saturn, was buried in the island of Crete. (Theophilus, lib. i.) Jupiter, son of Saturn, who was king of Crete, has a tomb
in

is still shewn there (*p*). Jupiter having ended his days in Crete, his relations and friends, in obedience to his last commands, erected a temple and a tomb to his memory. This temple still subsisted in the days of Plato; but time, or earthquakes, have destroyed it. This philosopher, who was well acquainted with the places he describes, speaks of it thus (*q*).
 “ The road, which leads from Cnossus to the
 “ cavern and temple of Jupiter, is very plea-
 “ fant. We continually meet with alleys of
 “ large tufted trees, whose foliage shelters us
 “ from the scorching beams of the sun. If
 “ we proceed still further, we find woods
 “ of cypress-trees, of surprising height and
 “ beauty; by the side of which are delight-
 “ ful meadows, where travellers may repose,
 “ and converse.”

From all these authorities we may conclude,

in that island. (Pomponius Mela, lib. ii. cap. 7.) We see in Crete a tomb, where, it is almost impossible to doubt, that Jupiter was buried. The inhabitants shew the remains of the inscription, which proves the fact. (Chrysostom, in Epist. Pauli ad Titum.) The Cretans possess the tomb of Jupiter, on which we read this inscription: *Here lies Zan, who is called Jupiter.*

(*p*) Cedrenus.

(*q*) Plato de Legibus, lib. i.

that

that a man, called Jupiter, who, by great actions, merited well of his subjects, and on whom divine honours were bestowed, died in the island of Crete; that a temple was erected to him, which has been destroyed by time; that his tomb was shewn with an inscription on it, until the time of the Roman Emperors, and that at present there is to be seen, about three leagues from Cnossus, an eminence, commonly called Mount Icarus, on the top of which the inhabitants of the country point out a heap of stones, which they call the tomb of Jupiter. As for the sacred cavern, in which he was brought up, and to which Minos repaired every ninth year, to converse with his father, and receive his laws, it may be presumed not to have been far distant from this place (*r*), but we did not see it.

As

(*r*) The ancients almost always join together the cavern and the tomb of Jupiter. Plato says, the cave and temple of Jupiter: because in his time the sepulchre was embellished with a temple. Minutius Felix says, "Jupiter reigned in Crete. . . . We still see his cave and tomb." The constant mention of the tomb and cavern together, seems to indicate that these monuments were not distant from each other.

The

As we descended the hill, we met with a village wedding, on its way to the neighbouring hamlet. A great number of Greeks, mounted on horses and mules, composed the escort of the bride, who was surrounded by a company of handsome girls. They were all decked out in their best array, and their long white veils fell gracefully on their shoulders : the men wore fine coloured sashes, and all appeared extremely merry. We thought it a necessary piece of French politeness to salute the bride, and drawing up in a line, as she passed, gave her a general discharge of musketry. Those among the Greeks who had arms, returned the compliment, and we separated with mutual expressions of respect.

We now descended into the plain, where, though it was the month of November, we found the heat considerable. We were to sleep at the convent of St. George, from which we were still three leagues distant, and in our road had to pass several ranges of hills, which form the basis of Mount Ida on the east. The

The ancients place the sacred cavern at the foot of Mount Ida. Plato describes it as on one side of Cnossus. The situation of Mount Icarus sufficiently corresponds with these indications.

country

country presented a great variety of the most picturesque prospects. Sometimes, from the summit of a hill, we discovered an immense horizon, terminated by mountains which concealed their heads in clouds; and presently straying along the bottom of profound vallies, adorned with fruit-trees, and flowering shrubs, we seemed as if imprisoned by the vast and steep declivities on each side. At length, after having continued ascending a long time, we perceived at a distance the monastery of St. George, the sight of which gave us no little pleasure, and we redoubled our pace. It was evening when we entered the court. The monks, at first, were alarmed at our number; and the superior, according to custom, concealed himself. But we had a person with us who was perfectly acquainted with the Greeks and their subterfuges. He addressed himself to some of the fathers, telling them, that we had with us the French consul, who was going to Canea, and who, as he had great influence with those in power in that country, was able to render essential services to their bishop, and all the convents in the island. They did not fail to convey this information to the superior, who instantly came
to

to receive and compliment us, and immediately all the doors were thrown open to our company.

We had travelled seven computed leagues, equal to ten French ones, and our horses were much tired. As soon as we had alighted, several children came to take them by the bridle, and walked them about for a quarter of an hour, before they put them into the stable. This custom is constantly observed in Crete: they never shut up the horses when in a sweat, but always make a rule of walking them about some time in the open air. Hence the Cretan horses are strong, healthy, and scarcely ever tire. They boldly climb the steepest rocks, and descend the same into the vallies, without stumbling. The traveller's life depends on the sureness of their footing: for he frequently passes along narrow paths on the edge of dreadful precipices, where a single false step would infallibly be his destruction.

While supper was preparing, one of the monks earnestly requested us to visit his cell. He was a lover of good wine, which indeed might be seen in his countenance, and he regaled us in the best manner he could with his beloved liquor. It is true, he had but one
cup,

cup, but that was large and deep; he circulated it briskly, and seemed highly pleased with the encomiums we bestowed on his wine.

The monks of Saint George possess extensive lands on which they feed numerous flocks, and which produce corn, barley, wine, oil, wax, and honey, in abundance. The Turks have left them these lands, on condition of their exercising hospitality towards all travellers, which they commonly do with a tolerable good grace. Both riders and horses are lodged and supplied with provisions. These houses are of great use in a country where there are neither inns nor caravanseras: for without them, the traveller would be obliged to carry with him a load of baggage, and every necessary of life. The monks cultivate their fields themselves, and owe what they enjoy to the labour of their hands.

A magnificent repast (s) was served up to us: the middle dish was a roasted pig, round which were excellent mutton, pigeons, and very fine poultry; the rest of the table was

(s) The French word is *ambigu*. An *ambigu* is an entertainment consisting of both meat and fruits. T.

covered with plates of pomegranates, almonds, grapes, fresh olives, and honey. This honey, as transparent as crystal, was delicious; as highly perfumed as the flowers themselves, as delicate as the finest sweet-meats, and equally grateful to the smell and taste. The superior set before us most exquisite wines; red, white, and orange-coloured, the produce of the hills round the monastery, on which we alternately bestowed the highest commendations.

After supper we were conducted to a spacious hall, where, notwithstanding the hardness of our beds, we perfectly well enjoyed the pleasures of repose. To shew respect to the French consul, they had allotted him a separate apartment, and placed two full decanters by his bed-side. In the morning, he wished to wash his mouth, and pouring out some of the supposed water, found it to be white wine. He took the other decanter, and filled his glass, but this proved to be pure brandy. No doubt, these good monks are accustomed to make libations to the god of sleep, or to console themselves for his rigours with the bottle.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T-

L E T T E R XXIII.

To M. L. M.

OUR intention being to visit Gortyna and the Labyrinth; we set out early in the morning from the monastery of St. George, and after thanking our hosts, who politely furnished us with provisions for our breakfast, directed our course toward the southern part of the island, and continued descending for two hours from the convent into the plain. The journey was less fatiguing than the preceding day. We travelled through a beautiful country interspersed with villages, and surrounded with olive and almond trees. The declivities of the hills on the right and left presented us with charming landscapes. This whole district appeared rich and populous; but the time of harvest and the vintage being over, we met with but few inhabitants, who were shut up in their houses, occupied in domestic labours.

After

After some hours travelling, a little path, lined with verdant turf, and watered by a limped stream, which meandered through the valley, invited us to halt. We spread out the provisions of the good monks, and breakfasted at the foot of a plane-tree. Our journey had sharpened our appetites, and we found our repast delicious. The water of the fountain was cool and pure, and a few bottles of wine rendered it still better. Our breakfast was very cheerful and agreeable, but soon over; we remounted our horses, and continued our journey.

Our way lay over a level ground, inclosed between two chains of mountains, the sides of which were furrowed by the channels of limpid streams. Numerous flocks of goats and sheep were feeding on thyme, or browsing on the leaves of wild shrubs. Here a cottage, surrounded with vineyards, shewed itself on the summit of a rock; and there another lay concealed in the obscurity of a thicket. Our eyes were amused on every side with the agreeable and variegated prospects, and we made a great progress in our journey without perceiving it.

The sun had run half his course; and we had been seven hours on horseback, when

Q
we

we arrived at a large town, the inhabitants of which have not the best of characters. They are accused of a disposition to rob travellers; but, confiding in our arms, we resolved to ask for a dinner. We were very indifferently received in several houses, and the forbidding appearance of those who lived in them made us go on further, till, at length, we knocked at a door, where we found the inhabitants better inclined. We did not find, indeed, the splendid table of our rich monks. Eggs, olives, honey, and bad cheese, were all they offered us; and for these we paid generously. When leaving this villanous place, many of the inhabitants insulted us with ill language; but the sight of our musquets levelled at them, and the drawn sabres of our janissaries, soon silenced them.

We now entered the plain of Messara, which is seven leagues in length, and extends as far as the sea on the south side of the island. It is the most fertile in corn of any in the kingdom of Candia; the soil here is excellent, and the crop never disappoints the expectation of the husbandman. A strait and good road here shewed us

we

we approached Gortyna; the ruins of which we soon discovered, and spent several hours in examining.

The origin of Gortyna is uncertain; the opinions of authors varying on the subject. We know, however, that it is of the highest antiquity. Homer speaks of it, as of a powerful city defended by walls. It was a flourishing place when Lycurgus travelled into Crete. Some say it was founded by Gortynus, son of Tegetes (*t*). Plato tells us, it was built by a colony from Gortyna, a city of Peloponnesus; and several ancient writers assert that Taurus, who carried off Europa, and who reigned in Crete, founded this celebrated city (*u*).

(*t*) Stephanus Byzantius. Gortyna received its name from the hero Gortynus. It was also called Larissa, Cremonia, and at length Gortyna. (Pausanias in Arcadicis.) It is related that Cydon, Catreus and Gortynus, sons of Tegetes, passed into the island of Crete, and gave their names to Cydon, Catrea, and Gortyna. But the Cretans reject this account, and say that Cydon was the son of Mercury, and Acacallidis the daughter of Minos; that Catreus was the son of Minos, and Gortynus, of Rhadamanthus.

(*u*) Plato de Legibus, lib. iv.

However well or ill founded these different accounts may be, Gortyna, situated in a plain of vast extent, watered by numerous rivulets, fertile in corn, barley, olives, and all kinds of productions, became one of the most considerable cities of the island. It was only five leagues distant from the sea, on the south-side, on which it had two harbours (*v*); Lebena, where was a famous temple (*w*), and Metalla, situated at the extremity of the cape so called. The people of Gortyna knew how to avail themselves of these advantages, and became exceedingly powerful. They united their arms with those of the Cnossians to subdue the neighbouring cities, and greatly extended the limits of their territory. Their walls were more than two leagues in circumference; but

(*v*) Eustathius in Dionysium. Gortyna was built by Taurus, who carried off Europa the Phœnician, and who reigned in Crete. (Chron. Alexand.) Taurus founded, in the island of Crete, a city which he called Gortyna, from the name of his mother, the grand-daughter of Jupiter. (Cédrenus.) Taurus built in Crete the city of Gortyna, so called after his mother's name.

(*w*) Strabo, lib. x. Gortyna has two ports on the Lybian sea; Lebena, from which it is only four leagues distant, and Metella, situated two leagues beyond.

having been destroyed by time, the magistrates began repairing them, but finished only eight stadia, leaving the rest of the town open (x). Strabo attributes the rebuilding these walls (y) to Ptolemy Philopater; but adds, that he did not complete them, and that they remained unfinished.

Gortyna contained several temples, among which the most remarkable were those of Apollo (z), Jupiter (a), and Diana (b). The first was held in great veneration by the people of Greece, who, in the time of a plague, sent thither deputies to consult its oracle (c). Menelaus, going in pursuit of Helen, sacrificed in the second a hecatomb to Jupiter; and Hannibal, dreading lest the avarice of the Gortynians might tempt them to deliver him up to his enemies, in order to obtain his treasures, the report of which had preceded his arrival, deposited, in presence

(x) Phranzes, Chron. lib. i.

(y) Strabo, lib. x.

(z) Stephan. Byzant. In the middle of Gortyna was the temple and altar of Apollo.

(a) Photius Biblioth. Hist. lib. v.

(b) Æmilius Probus.

(c) Antonius Liberalis, metamorph. 25.

of the people, vessels filled with lead, and covered with gold and silver, in the temple of Diana, declaring that he confided to them his fortune. Shortly after, however, he took an opportunity to escape into Asia with his riches enclosed in brazen statues; but the implacable vengeance of Rome pursued him every where. The Lethe ran near Gortyna (*d*). Strabo (*e*) assures us that he crossed it. This city having undergone frequent revolutions, the river may have, at some period, flowed round its walls, and, at others, through the city; for it is certain that, at present, ruins are discoverable beyond this river, which is now only a tolerably large rivulet. It was called Lethe, because Harmonia, the daughter of Venus, forgot her husband Cadmus on its banks (*f*). Geographers reckon several rivers of this name. Strabo enumerates four (*g*).

The

(*d*) Solinus. The river Lethe runs near Gortyna, where Taurus carried off Europa.

(*e*) Strabo. The river Lethe runs through the city of Gortyna.

(*f*) Vibius Sequester, de Amnibus.

(*g*) Magnesia was situated on the Meander, where the

river

The ruins of Gortyna cover a vast extent of ground, and enable us to form some idea of its ancient magnificence. Such of its monuments as still subsist, are not of the highest antiquity. One, of the most remarkable is a gate built with large bricks, which have been formerly covered with freestone; those of the sides and arch-way have been detached, yet it still does, and must long continue to subsist. This edifice is of a considerable thickness, and presents an extensive front. It cannot be supposed more ancient than the time when Ptolemy Philopater undertook to rebuild the walls of Gortyna. Beyond this gate, we find a large open space, in form nearly a parallelogram, on each side of which is a double row of pedestals. The bases of the marbles are buried, and the tops alone appear above the ground. The order in which they are ranged gives reason to conjecture they were part of the portico of a temple. At different intervals we meet

river Lethe falls into it; another river of the same name runs near Gortyna; a third bathes Tricca, a city of Thessaly; and we find a fourth Lethe in the western part of Africa.

with

with heaps of rubbish, and columns of marble, and of granite, buried up to the middle of their shafts. The capitals lie near them, broken off; but several of them have none. Near the farther end of these ruins, on the banks of that beautiful river, where Harmonia forgot Cadmus, we enter a church, one side of which is destroyed. Its architecture is simple, without colonnades; and it is about one hundred and twenty feet long, by sixty wide. This is probably the ancient cathedral founded by Titus, the disciple of Saint Paul. Some considerable ruins, situated at a little distance, may be the remains of the palace of the archbishop.

These ruins do not appear suitable to what might be expected from the grandeur and magnificence of Gortyna. But we must consider that the finest marbles have been carried off, that we see, in adjacent villages, ancient columns employed in making gates for the Turkish gardens, and that the greatest part of its ornaments are buried under the earth, which is considerably raised. If the ground were dug into, and proper researches made, we should certainly find statues and valuable
anti-

antiquities. At present, the husbandman pales his plough over them, and covers with his harvest the ruins of the palaces and temples of Gortyna. Such, Madam, is the destiny of ancient cities. They are the work of man, and perish like himself. Those which, in ages past, were the ornament, or terror of the world, Thebes, Memphis and Babylon, are now no more. Can you imagine that Paris, that noble city, which contains within itself all the arts, and innumerable inhabitants, will exist for ever? Can you doubt that the curious traveller shall one day wander amid heaps of rubbish, in search of the situation of her temples and her palaces? Let us console ourselves: that period is still very remote.

We quitted the plain of Gortyna to visit the Labyrinth. The road leading to this memorable place is rough and steep; but, after an ascent of near an hour, we, at length, reached the entrance. We had brought with us the thread of Ariadne, that is to say, four hundred fathoms of twine, which we fastened to the gate, where we stationed two janissaries, with orders to suffer nobody to enter. The opening of the Labyrinth is

natural,

natural, and not wide. When you have advanced a little, you find a considerable space strewed with large stones, and covered with a flat roof cut out of the solid mountain. To discern our way amid this gloomy abode, we each carried a flambeau. Two Greeks bore the clew, which they unfolded or wound up as occasion required. At first we lost ourselves in different alleys without an opening, and were obliged to measure back our steps, but at length discovered the true passage, which is on the right as we enter; we arrive at it by a narrow path, and are obliged to creep on our hands and feet for the space of an hundred yards, the roof being extremely low. At the end of this narrow passage the ceiling rises suddenly, and we were able to walk upright, in the midst of the impenetrable darkness that surrounded us, and the numerous ways which struck off on each side, and crossed each other in different directions. The two Greeks we had hired trembled with apprehension; the sweat poured down their faces, and they refused to advance, unless we took the lead.

The alleys through which we passed were in general from seven to eight feet high; in
width

width they varied from six to ten, and sometimes more. They are all chiseled out of the rock, and the stones, of a dirty grey, are ranged in horizontal layers. In some places, huge blocks of stone, half detached from the roof, seem ready to fall on your head, and you must stoop in passing them, not without some danger of their falling. This havoc has, no doubt, been occasioned by earthquakes, which are so frequent in Crete.

Thus did we continue wandering in this maze, of which we endeavoured to discover all the windings, and as soon as we had got to the end of one alley, entered into another. Sometimes we were stopped short by a passage without an opening, and at others, after long circuits, were astonished to find ourselves at the cross-way from which we had set out. Frequently, after encircling with our cord a great extent of rock, we were obliged to wind it up, and return the way we came. It is impossible to describe to what a degree these passages are multiplied and crooked; some of them form curves which lead you insensibly to a vast empty space, supported by enormous pillars, whence three or four passages strike off that

conduct

conduct to opposite points; others, after long windings, divide into several branches: these again extend a great length, and, terminated by the rock, oblige the traveller to trace back his way. We walked with precaution in the doublings of this vast Labyrinth, amid the eternal darkness that reigns throughout it, and which our torches could hardly dispel. Thus situated, the imagination raises up phantoms; it figures to itself precipices under the feet of the curious, monsters placed as sentinels, and, in a word, a thousand chimeras which can have no existence.

The precaution we had taken of proceeding with the thread of Ariadne, and of fastening it at different distances lest it should break, allowed us to advance farther than Belon, Tournefort, and Pocock, were able to do for want of such assistance. We observed, in several parts of the middle avenue, the cyphers 1700 written with a black pencil, by the hand of the celebrated French botanist. An extraordinary circumstance which he remarks, and which we admired no less than he had done, is the property possessed by the rock of presenting the names engraven on it in relief. We saw several

of them, wherein this sort of sculpture had arisen to the thickness of two lines (the sixth part of an inch). The substance of this relief is whiter than the stone (*b*).

After straying for a long time in the frightful cavern of the Minotaur (*i*), we arrived at the extremity of the alley which Tournefort followed. There we found a wide space, with cyphers cut in the rock, none of which were of an earlier date than the fourteenth century. There is another similar to this on the right; each of them may be about twenty-four or thirty feet square. To arrive at this place we had run out almost all our line, that is to say, about twenty-four hundred feet, without mentioning our various excursions. We remained three hours in the Labyrinth, continually walking, without being able to flatter ourselves with having seen every thing. I believe it would be impossible for any man

(*b*) Several of us engraved our names deeply at the end of 1779. At the time of preparing these letters for publication, I am informed that the hollow is already filled with this white substance, which projects about a line (the twelfth of an inch) above the names.

(*i*) The reader will see in the following letter why I give it this name,

to

to get out of it, if left there without either clew or flambeau; he would lose himself in a thousand windings: the horrors of the place, and the intense darkness, would fill him with consternation, and he must miserably perish.

On our return, we examined a winding we had not before noticed; it conducted us to a beautiful grotto, rising into a dome, wrought by the hand of nature. It has no stalactites, nor indeed is a single one to be found in the whole extent of the cavern, as the water does not filtrate through the roof. Every thing is dry; and, as the air is never renewed, the smell is extremely disagreeable. Thousands of bats, the dung of which lies in heaps, inhabit this gloomy abode. They are the only monsters we discovered. We came out with a great deal of pleasure, and breathed the external air with a kind of rapture. Night now began to come on, and the road was not very easy to be found; we hastened, therefore, to descend the mountain, and entered a neighbouring farm, where we were very hospitably entertained by a Turk.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T

LETTER XXIV.

To M. L. M.

SEVERAL authors, Madam, among whom are Beson (*k*) and Pocock (*l*), pretend that the Labyrinth, which I have been describing, is no more than a quarry, from which stones were brought to build the city of Gortyna. M. Tournefort (*m*) has satisfactorily confuted this opinion; he has proved that the stone of this cavern is too soft to be fit for building, and that it would have cost enormous sums to convey it across the steep mountains that lie between the Labyrinth and the city. It must have been much more natural for the inhabitants to procure their stone from the mountains in the vicinity of Gortyna. Had the Labyrinth been

(*k*) Observations de plusieurs Singularités et Choses memorables trouvées en Grèce, &c.

(*l*) Description of the East.

(*m*) Voyage du Levant.

but

but an ordinary quarry, why leave at the entrance a channel a hundred yards long, so low as not to be accessible but by creeping, and from whence stones could not be brought until broken in pieces? This would have been to double both labour and expence to no purpose. It is much more probable, adds M. Tournefort, that nature has produced the Labyrinth, and that the passage at the entrance has not been altered, to shew posterity what was the state of these subterranean channels before they were enlarged by the hand of man. It is evident, that nothing more has been attempted than merely to render them passable, since only those stones have been cleared away which have obstructed the passage; all the others have been left, and are ranged in order along the walls.

But for what purpose was this Labyrinth intended? Is it of great antiquity? And was it there the Minotaur was confined? These are questions which, I believe, have never been answered. Let us endeavour, if possible, to resolve them. The discovery of truth, obscured by the lapse of time, gives
plea-

pleasure to the reader, and amply recompenses the labour of investigation.

In the first place, it is certain that the immense cavern, the windings of which I have described, is not the Labyrinth formed by Dædalus, on the plan of that of Egypt (*n*). All the ancient writers attest, that the famous work of that celebrated architect was situated at Cnossus. “It was agreed,” says Pausanias, “to send to the Minotaur of Crete seven virgins and seven boys, to be thrown into the Labyrinth built in the city of Cnossus (*o*).” “As soon as Apollonius arrived at Cnossus, he visited the Labyrinth (*p*),” &c.

(*q*) John Tzetzes very satisfactorily describes this famous edifice, and informs us of the use for which it was intended. “Dædalus, the Athenian, made for king Minos a prison, from which it was impossible to escape.

(*n*) Diodorus Siculus, lib. i. It is said that Dædalus, travelling into Egypt, was struck with admiration at the sight of the Labyrinth constructed with wondrous art, and that he formed a similar one for Minos king of Crete.

(*o*) Pausanias in Atticis.

(*p*) Philostratus, in Vita Apollonii.

(*q*) Johannes Tzetzes.

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“ Its

“ Its numerous windings were in the form
 “ of a snail, and it was called the Labyrinth.”
 Philocorus (r) asserts, after the unanimous
 testimony of the Cretans, that “ the La-
 “ byrinth was a prison contrived more effec-
 “ tually to prevent the escape of male-
 “ factors.”

Such then was the plan of that celebrated
 work of antiquity, constructed on the model
 of that of Egypt. It was a prison wherein
 Theseus and his companions were to end their
 days, or live deprived of honour. But love
 and courage extricated them from their dan-
 ger. This Labyrinth subsists no longer. It
 was indeed already destroyed in the days
 of Pliny. Let us therefore proceed to con-
 sider that which is still existing.

Permit me, Madam, to go somewhat fur-
 ther back, in order to throw a little light on
 a few obscure facts, mingled with so many
 fables. By collecting the various opinions of
 ancient authors, perhaps, we may be able to

(r) Plutarch, in Theseo.

remove

remove the veil which conceals truth. You know that Androgeos, son of Minos, went to Athens, and that Ægeus, at his return from Troezen^(s), celebrated what were called the Panathenaic games, to which all Greece repaired. The Cretan hero entered the lists, vanquished all the combatants, and was publicly crowned^(t). This prince entered into a friendly alliance with the Pallantides, who made pretensions to the throne. Ægeus, dreading the consequences of this friendship, had him assassinated near Cenan in Attica, when on his way to a sacred solemnity.

(u) Minos soon appeared at the head of a naval armament, to demand vengeance for the death of his son; and, after a long and bloody siege, during which Athens was ravaged by the plague, Ægeus, incapable of defending himself any longer, demanded of the king of Crete what satisfaction he required. That prince insisted on his sending him, every se-

(s) Apollodorus, lib. iii.

(t) Diodorus Siculus, lib. iv.

(u) Apollodorus, lib. iii.

venth year (v), seven boys and seven girls, to be delivered to the Minotaur. These unhappy victims were abandoned to him, and he carried them off in his fleet. At the stated time he again appeared with a number of ships, and was satisfied in like manner.

These children were chosen by lot, and the parents of those on whom the fatal chance fell, murmured loudly against Ægeus. They were filled with indignation, on reflecting that the author of the mischief should alone escape the punishment (x); and that he should raise to the throne a natural son (y), while he deprived them of their legitimate children. They were even ripe for a revolt. But when the time for sending the third tribute arrived,

(v) Diodorus, lib. iv. says, that they were sent every seven years. Apollodorus says, every year. Plutarch (in Vita Thesei) asserts, that this tribute took place only once in nine years. These opinions, though they vary respecting the number of years, all confirm the fact.

(x) Plutarch, in Vita Thesei.

(y) Hygin. Fab. xxxvii. Neptune and Ægeus, sons of Pandion, had amorous commerce, in the same night, with Æthra, daughter of Pytheus, in the temple of Minerva. Theseus sprang from this union. Isocrates says, he was called the son of Ægeus, but that Neptune was really his father.

Theseus, whom several gallant actions had already raised to the fame of a hero, and who, in the bloom of youth, united every endowment of mind and body (z), was determined to put an end to these murmurs. He voluntarily offered himself to be one of the victims, resolving to perish, or free his country from an odious tribute; and departed, after sacrificing to Apollo at Delphi, who directed him to take Venus for his guide (a).

Let us now endeavour to discover the true meaning of the fable of the Minotaur. Taurus was the name of one of the principal men of Crete, who was a native of Cnossus (b). His valour, and other great qualities, no doubt, recommended him to Minos, who made choice

(z) Servius ad *Æneid*, lib. vi. Theseus was as beauteous as brave. (Isocrates) I may say to the praise of Theseus, that, being born in the time of Hercules, he so comported himself as to merit a like glory. Not only did they bear the same arms, but they applied to the same exercises of body and mind, as became two heroes of the same blood.

(a) Plutarch. Theseus having consulted the Delphic Apollo, before his departure, the oracle told him to take Venus for his guide.

(b) Isaac Tzetzes ad Lycophron. Taurus was a native of Cnossus, a city of Crete, and general of the army that carried off Europa.

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of him to command an expedition against Phœnicia. "Taurus," adds Palæphatus, "a citizen of Cnossus, made war on the Tyrians. Having overcome them, he carried off several young women from their city, among whom was Europa, daughter of king Agenor. This it was that gave rise to the fable of a bull having seized Europa, and carried her away. The poets, fond of the marvellous, added, that she was ravished by Jupiter in the form of a bull."

The conqueror lived at the court of Minos: he had returned laden with the spoils of Tyre, and as he possessed the advantage of a fine person, the renown he had acquired by his military exploits, rendered him still more handsome in the eyes of Pasiphaë, the daughter of the Sun, and wife of the king of Crete. She became enamoured of him, and finding means to gratify her passion (c), had a son by him. Minos having discovered "that this child could not be his, but that he was the fruit of the amours of Taurus and Pasiphaë, would not, however, put him to death, but confined him to the mountains, to serve the shepherds. In these solitary abodes he grew

(c) Palæphat. de Fab.

" wild

" wild and fierce, and lived by robbery, and
 " stealing sheep from the flocks. Having
 " learnt that Minos had sent foldiers to take
 " him, he dug a deep cavern, which he made
 " his place of refuge. At length the king of
 " Crete sent to the son of Taurus such cri-
 " minals as he wished to punish with death."
 His ferocity, and this employment, no doubt,
 procured him the name of Minotaur, and in-
 duced poets and painters to represent him as
 a monster, half a man, and half a bull. An
 ingenious emblem, which had reference at
 once to his birth, his character, and his odi-
 ous services.

Theseus having landed in Crete, endea-
 voured to calm the anger of Minos, who had
 fallen in love with (*d*) Pæribea, one of the
 seven Athenian virgins. He convinced him,
 that he was the son of Neptune, and endea-
 voured to mitigate the rigour of his fate.
 The prince, almost disarmed, treated him at
 first very favourably, and permitted him to
 mix with the combatants in the public games.
 The Athenian hero excited universal admira-
 tion (*e*) by his address and courage, and en-

(*d*) Plutarch, in Vita Thesei.

(*e*) Ibid.

chanted.

chanted every heart with the gracefulness of his person (*f*).

In Crete, women were permitted to be present at the public shews (*g*); and Ariadne saw Theseus engage with, and overcome, the most renowned warriors of her country; but while she admired the bravery and graces of the youthful hero, love stole into her heart, and inflicted one of his deepest wounds. It is probable she confessed her passion to the conqueror; and that, to fulfil the precept of the oracle (*b*), he profited by her declaration. It is natural to suppose also, that Minos, informed of this intrigue, considered it as a new offence, and resolved to shut him up in the Labyrinth of Cnossus, that he might be for ever buried in the horrid obscurity of that tremendous prison. This conjecture is rendered more than probable by the following

(*f*) Servius, Eustathius, and Hyginus, agree in informing us, that Theseus united the utmost gracefulness of person with a lofty stature, strength, and courage.

(*g*) Plutarch (in *Vitâ Thesei*) says, Theseus was admitted to the public games of Crete; that he vanquished the warriors who entered the lists against him; and that Ariadne saw, and fell in love with him.

(*b*) Apollo, as we have seen, had commanded him to sacrifice to Love.

passage.

passage (i). " Theseus arriving at the gate
 " of the Labyrinth, encountered Deucalion
 " and the guards, and put them to death."
 So desperate an action determined Minos no
 longer to keep any measures with his enemy,
 and he sent him to Taurus, with orders to put
 him to death (k).

You recollect, Madam, that Taurus was the
 executioner of Minos; that he dwelt in a
 profound cavern, in which he destroyed the
 prisoners condemned to death. The ancients
 assert, that the name of Labyrinth was given
 also to this gloomy abode, in which art
 assisting nature, had formed new passages,
 and contrived a multitude of windings, from
 which it was almost impossible to escape.

" The Labyrinth of Crete (l) was a cavern
 " dug out of a mountain." Cedrenus adds
 these remarkable words (m): " The Minotaur
 " fled to a place called the Labyrinth, and
 " concealed himself there, in the depth of a
 " cavern."—" (n) The Labyrinth of Crete,

(i) Plutarch, in Vita Thesei.

(k) Palæphat. de Incredilibus.

(l) Auctor. Etymologic.

(m) Cedrenus.

(n) Eustathius, in Odyss.

" that

“ that subterraneous cavern, with a thousand
 “ windings, contained an inhabitant.”

These testimonies, Madam, remove all doubt. They accurately describe the Labyrinth I visited; its situation in a mountain, its winding passages, sufficiently prove it contained an inhabitant. This could be no other than the son of Taurus, who, in order to escape the emissaries of Minos, dug a cavern in the mountain. This horrid place was his abode, and, in part, his work; and here the monster performed the bloody executions commanded by the king. The following facts will clearly demonstrate these assertions. But let us return to Theseus.

(o) Condemned to suffer an ignominious death by the hand of the executioner of Minos, the Athenian hero departed from Gortyna; and, ignorant of the destiny that awaited him, must have fallen, but for Love, who watched over his life. Ariadne, alarmed, informed him of the snare laid for him. She described to him the windings and dangers

(o) Minos, getting his enemy Theseus into his power, sent him to be slain by Taurus. Ariadne, informed of this design, sent him a sword, with which he slew the Minotaur. Palephat. de Incredib.

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of the Labyrinth (*p*); gave him the thread by which he might direct his steps; taught him the method of making use of it, and sent him the sword that was to shed the hateful blood of the Minotaur.

It should seem as if Theseus had procured secret friends in the island, and that, by his address, his courage, or the good offices of his mistress, he had gained the guards, who attended on Taurus, and assisted him in his executions: for, as soon as he arrived at Gortyna, all of them, “forfaking the Minotaur (*q*), pretended to take to flight. The monster, suspecting he was betrayed, fled into the place called the Labyrinth.” These words clearly prove, that he escaped into the gloomy cavern I have before mentioned; which was a place of refuge, perhaps his fortress; for there he put his victims to death.

(*p*) Plutarch, in Vita Thesei. Theseus arriving in the island of Crete, Ariadne fell desperately in love with him. She bore him a son, and taught him how to escape from the winding passages of the Labyrinth; and he slew the Minotaur.

(*q*) All the guards forfaking the Minotaur of Gortyna, pretended to take to flight. The Minotaur, suspecting treachery, took refuge in the place called the Labyrinth. Cedrenus.

Claudian,

Claudian, to distinguish this cavern from the famous edifice built by Dædalus at Cnossus (*r*), calls it, "the Labyrinth of Gortyna, the usual abode of the Minotaur."

The retreat of the executioner of Minos might have been a feint. He might wish to draw his enemy into a cavern, with all the avenues of which he was well acquainted, and where it would have been easy for him to kill him, by attacking him at an advantage. But Theseus had the thread of Ariadne, her sword, and his own undaunted courage. He pursued the Minotaur through the winding alleys of his den, came up with him, and put him to death.

As soon as he had executed his design, he fled precipitately on board a vessel (*s*), taking with him his mistress, and the young victims he had saved. The remainder of the history

(*r*) Claudian, in *Sext. Conf. Honorii*. It forms different circuits, which are neither inferior to the art with which the Labyrinth of Gortyna, the usual abode of the Minotaur, is built, nor the windings of the river Meander.

(*s*) Plutarch, in *Vita Thesei*. He slew the Minotaur, and immediately hastened on board his ship, carrying with him Ariadne, and the young Athenians.

of

of Ariadne and Theseus is well known; not to mention that it is foreign to my subject.

This is what appears to me most probable concerning the Labyrinths of Crete. One of them, situated at Cnossus, was an edifice built by Dædalus (*t*), and which, on account of its various windings, deceived those who got bewildered in it, and prevented their return. It was in the form of a snail, and of vast magnitude, as well as great strength. Minos converted it into a royal prison; but the criminals, confined there, were only deprived of their liberty.

The other, near Gortyna, and called by the ancients the Labyrinth of Gortyna, still subsists, and has been treated of in the preceding letter. It was partly the work of the son of Taurus; but the first sketch of it was given by nature. He indeed rendered the passages more spacious, and excavated new ones. In this cavern he destroyed those who were sent to him by the king to be put to death. Thus have we visited the gloomy habitation of a man, who, from the ferociousness of his character, merited to be transformed into a monster.

(*t*) Apollodorus, lib. iii.

There were several other similar labyrinths, more or less complicated. Near Nauplia, says Strabo (u), we see caverns, in which labyrinths have been formed, and which are called the Cyclops.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(u) Strabo, lib. viii.

LETTER XXV.

To M. L. M.

LET us now, Madam, pursue our journey. The Turkish farmer, who had received us so kindly at our coming out of the Labyrinth, offered us the best entertainment in his power. But our bed was the carpet on which we supped, and we laid ourselves down, booted as we were. In the morning, therefore, we were soon dressed, and we set out at sun-rise, after satisfying our host, who accepted what we thought proper to give him.

For some hours, our way lay along the plain, and we had an easy and pleasant road; but when we had arrived at the high lands, it became extremely rugged. We travelled along the sides of the hills which terminate Mount Ida, to the southward. Two chains of these hills formed, between us and that mountain, a double amphitheatre, above which it reared its majestic head. We could perceive large clouds, of a shining whiteness, ranging themselves around its summit, and circling it with
a silver

a silver crown, which, illumined by the sun, shone with a wonderful splendor. These clouds, obeying the law of attraction, after encompassing for some hours the head of the mountain, fell in imperceptible drops on all the surrounding objects, and intirely disappeared; others succeeded, and were dissipated in the same manner.

This attractive power, universally diffused, which forces the clouds towards the tops of lofty mountains, is the origin of springs, fountains, streams, and all the rivers on the globe. In the higher regions of the air, where the rising vapours are condensed by cold, the water of the clouds is converted into hail and snow; but if they attain only a moderate height, where the cold is not very great, they fall in mists, rains, and copious dews. When the hills are covered with forests, the springs and rivulets become more numerous, as the leaves of trees possess the peculiar property of attracting the humidity diffused throughout the atmosphere. To procure water for a dry country, nothing more would be necessary than to plant forest-trees on the hill-tops. When we find the ancients bestowing the name of rivers on the Glaucus and the Xanthus,

Xanthus, which run through Asia Minor, and are now little more than inconsiderable brooks, we are tempted to suspect them of exaggeration. But if we reflect that the hills, where these rivers arise, are at present stript of their trees and soil, and no longer oppose a barrier to the passage of the clouds, though formerly crowned with lofty forests, they attracted them around their tops, and drew from them all their moisture, we shall find no difficulty in believing that the Glæucus, the Xanthus, and many other at present insignificant rivulets, might anciently, when fed with more copious supplies, well deserve the appellation of rivers.

While we were journeying round Mount Ida, we perceived the summit gradually overcast, and soon after vanish enveloped in a thick mist; nor was it long before we again perceived the naked top whitened with heaps of snow, and the sides covered with the glittering mantle of winter. We, however, who were less elevated by twelve hundred fathom, enjoyed a delightful temperature. The sky was clear and serene, and the sun moved through the azure vault in all his majesty and splendor. In the deep vallies on our left, myrtles and laurel roses skirted the channels of the tor-

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rents.

rents. Trees, in their brightest verdure, adorned the foot of the mountain; and, in the month of November, we found groves, as green and pleasant as in the middle of spring.

Mount Ida begins near Candia, and stretches from east to west, as far as the White Mountains. It extends from the northern to the southern sea, and is the highest in the island. In many parts of it, the snow lies all the year. From its summit we may discover the sea of Crete, and that of Lybia. The eye wanders over an immense horizon, and discerns many of the scattered islands of the Archipelago, such as Cytherea, Milo, and Argentiera. If we confine our attention to the view of the objects before us, they appear as in an immense perspective, and present prospects highly varied, and astonishingly rich and beautiful.

In summer, when the snows are melted, vast plains, situated on the declivity of the mountain, afford excellent pasturage for the flocks. On that part of it opposite to Candia are forests, consisting chiefly of maple and green oak. The southern sides abound with the strawberry tree, privets, and rock-roses. The eastern brow is beautified with cedars, pines, and cypresses; but on the west, its perpendicular

perpendicular sides present nothing but piles of rocks, impossible to scale. It is enriched with an infinity of other plants, which would delight the botanist, such as the true melilot, the yellow-flowered marjoram, &c. Abundant streams flow on every side from its summits. Some rush in torrents into the valleys, while others water the plains, which produce luxurious harvests, or, distributed by art, maintain fecundity in the innumerable fruit-trees, which grow round the villages. The hill-sides, exposed to the powerful rays of the sun, are clothed with vineyards, which produce exquisite wines; and the olive-trees everywhere constitute the principal riches of the country.

The diversity of landscapes, which constantly charmed the eye, made us forget the dangers to which we were exposed. For the space of a league we rode along the slope of a very high hill. On one side, the ground was as perpendicular as a wall, and on the other was the channel of a torrent, two hundred feet deep, through which the water rushed, over the large flint-stones, with a violent noise. The path at last grew so narrow, that when once fairly entered, it was impos-

sible to dismount, but at the risk of throwing both ourselves and our horses into the abyfs below. I can assure you, Madam, that, in many places, the road was not more than a foot and a half wide, though on the brink of a tremendous precipice, which no one could look down without shuddering. We were now convinced of the excellence of our horses, not one of which so much as made a false step. They seemed to feel the danger, trod with caution, and examined where to put their feet. In a wet place, however, mine made a small slip, and tottered for a moment on the brink of the precipice; but I kept my seat firmly, and he recovered himself. We descended from these heights by so steep a valley, that the rider's back was against the crupper of the horse. But at length, after ten hours ride, we arrived, in perfect safety, at the monastery of Afomatos.

It was night, and our Janissaries entering first, the superior thought the convent was attacked by a body of Turks, and ran and hid himself. But we had with us, as I have before said, an interpreter, who was perfectly acquainted with the manœuvres of these monks; and who, after making diligent search,

at

at length discovered his hiding-place. He complimented him on the part of the French consul, who had just arrived; made him a proffer of his good offices at Canea, and, by alternately addressing his vanity and self-interest, completely gained his confidence and favour. At first we had been conducted into the apartment usually allotted to strangers, where we must have slept upon the floor, and been contented with a meagre repast; but appearances were greatly changed when we had made the master our friend. He came in person to congratulate the consul on his safe arrival, and invited us into a spacious hall, in the midst of which a table was spread. We held a conversation with him for some time; and our adroit interpreter, discovering our host's weak side, flattered his vanity, and gave him great hopes from the power and influence of the consul. Nor was this labour thrown away: we were quickly supplied with every thing we could wish, and, including meat, vegetables, and fruits, had not less than forty dishes on the table. This was a charming sight to hungry men, who had travelled the whole day without eating; nor did we remain idle spectators. The superior honoured us with

with his presence, and heartily encouraged us to satisfy our appetites. He gave a private key to a deacon, who stood behind his chair, who directly left the room, and soon returned with several bottles of old wine, the odour of which was of itself a perfume. To enliven the company, the good father drank several glasses to our healths, and insisted on our returning the compliment. Towards the end of our feast, he was in such high spirits, that, thinking to amuse us, he proposed his priests should chant the *Kyrie eleison*. We accepted his proposal; and immediately a number of children, deacons, and sub-deacons, made their appearance, and, on a signal given, began the *Kyrie eleison*. They sang through their noses, and produced so frightful a noise, that it was with the utmost difficulty we could refrain from laughing; but at length they concluded their discordant jargon, and we clapped our hands in applause. We were now in hopes that this entertainment was ended, but he begged us to go through the same ceremony in French. On this, a young man in our company struck up a lively song, and we all joined chorus. The superior, and his brethren, were delighted with the spright-
liness

liness of our *Kyrie eleison*; but affirmed, their music was more solemn and majestic; to which we readily subscribed,

Pardon me, Madam, for taking up your time with such trivial incidents; but nothing can, sometimes, better describe the character of the people we visit. The Greeks, notwithstanding the contemptible state of debasement to which they are reduced, still retain a pride and vanity, that can only be equalled by their ignorance. By flattering these, you may obtain every thing; but if their foibles are not humoured, they become implacable enemies, and you are in no small danger of feeling the effects of their perfidious resentment. The ignorant superior of Asomatos wished to display his uncommon talents, and excite our admiration, by mingling his wretched voice with those of the priests, giving them the pitch, and chanting with them the *Kyrie eleison*; and the good cheer, choice wines, and excellent beds, we here met with, we entirely owed to a little well-timed complaisance, and the incense we offered to the vanity of our host.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXVI.

To M. L. M.

THE monastery of Afomatos, Madam, is situated at the foot of Mount Ida, on the south side, and is so near, that large pieces of rock, that in many places hang over, seem ready to fall upon it, and bury it under their fragments. The other side of the convent is much more pleasing, and presented us with the agreeable prospects of orchards of jubjub trees, with ripe fruit, and orange, lemon, and almond trees. These Monks possess large plantations of olives, arable lands, and excellent vineyards on the hill-sides; and their fields are fertilized by numerous rivulets. Afomatos would be a delightful place, if it were a little farther from the mountains.

We got on horseback about seven in the morning, and gave extravagant thanks to the superior, who came to wish us a good journey. Our intention was to breakfast at Arcadi, the handsomest monastery in the island; and as it was

was only three leagues distant, we expected to reach it in good time; but the roads were dreadful. We continued ascending for an hour and a half, before we came to the top of the first chain of heights, that run parallel with Mount Ida, and on which Arcadi is built. We met with steep paths, cut out of the rock, and our horses were obliged to clamber up steps of marble and granite, without slipping or stumbling, otherwise we must have been dashed to pieces on the stones, or tumbled head-long into the torrents. I do not exaggerate the horror of the roads we had to pass. The first time one unaccustomed to such ways travels in Crete, he imagines his life in danger at every step; but more experience soon relieves him from his fears: for there is no place so dangerous and dreadful, but it may be easily passed with the mules and horses of the country.

We were repaid for our fatigues by the beauty of the prospects which every where presented themselves to our view. We traversed whole woods of strawberries and privets, which never lose their verdure. Firs, of a prodigious height, rear their heads amid the snow, and are the haunts of herds of wild

wild goats. In the vallies, the course of the waters is traced by tufts of myrtle, some branches of which were in flower, and mingled the verdant lustre of their foliage with that of the laurel rose. The sheep were feeding on the brow of the rocks, and the cottages, surrounded with clumps of trees, formed landscapes the eye was never wearied with admiring. Sometimes these prospects were sufficiently near to discriminate every object, and at others, distant and obscure, presented only light shades, pleasingly sketched in the horizon.

After a fatiguing journey of three hours, we arrived at the convent of Arcadi, where the superior received us politely, and ordered breakfast to be prepared. This monastery, situated in Mount Ida, possesses very extensive tracts of land, which are carefully cultivated by its numerous monks; and the oil, wine, corn, and wax, produced on them every year, amount in value to considerable sums. The good fathers live much at their ease, and are very hospitable to travellers.

The apartments of this monastery are built round a large court, in which is a handsome church, whither the Greeks of the neighbourhood

bourhood repair to divine service. Among this numerous body of monks there are but few priests; the greater part of them do not enter into holy orders, but serve in quality of brethren, and are employed in the most fatiguing labours of agriculture. We visited the cellar, in which Tournefort (*u*) says, he reckoned a hundred casks of wine; but we saw only forty barrels full; these, however, were very large. Into this cellar the superior descends, at the end of every vintage, to bless the new wines, and the following is the form of his benediction (*x*): “O Lord God, “who lovest men, look down on this wine, “and on those who shall drink it. Bless our “casks, as thou didst bless the well of Jacob, “the pool of Siloam, and the drink of thy “holy apostles. O Lord, who didst con- “descend to be present at the wedding of “Cana, where, by changing of water into “wine, thou manifestedst thy glory to thy “disciples, send now thy holy Spirit on this “wine, and bless it in thy name. Amen.”

After a plentiful breakfast, we desired to see the library of the convent, of which we

(*u*) Voyage du Levant.

(*x*) Idem.

had heard so much from the good monks. It was, as they said, the most valuable, numerous, and complete, in the island. We expected, therefore, to have found some literary treasures, or at least the best authors of ancient Greece. They conducted us into an apartment, where we saw about two hundred old volumes, ranged on shelves, and covered with dust, which did not seem to have had the honour of a visit for many a day. They consisted, in general, of books of devotion, sermons, and controversial divinity. After turning over a great number, without finding any thing that merited attention, except a manuscript Homer, which they would not sell, we went to return our thanks to the superior, and set out for Retimo.

Leaving the monastery, we continued descending for an hour to reach the plain. When there, we found a smooth and level road, that lay through a country which, from its verdure and fecundity, may be compared to the county of Avignon, except that its trees and plants are different. It is impossible to tire on a journey, when we travel through a fine country; we then congratulate ourselves that we are on horseback, and,

and, therefore, enabled to command a more extensive horizon, and lose nothing of the situations, landscapes, and beauties of nature. When the temperature of the climate is mild, we enjoy too the serenity of the heavens, the purity of the air, the coolness of the winds, and exquisite perfumes exhaled on all sides from the odoriferous plants. Shut up in a carriage, the traveller loses all these advantages; and we find, throughout the east, there is no other mode of travelling but on horses, mules, or camels. Litters are only for the women, who are condemned, by the jealousy of the men, to live in imprisonment, even when on a journey.

A rich Jew merchant, settled at Retimo, quietly carried on his commerce there, by virtue of a firman of the Porte, obtained for him by the French consul. As it was his interest to keep well with his successor, he made great preparations to receive him. As soon as he knew we were coming, he sent the new consul a horse, superbly caparisoned, and we made a pompous entry into the town. We alighted at the merchant's house, where we found every conveniency we could desire. That we might enjoy the coolness of the evening,

evening, supper was served up under a portico, open on one side to the court-yard, and on the other, to a garden full of orange-trees. This was absolutely a luxurious banquet, in which our host displayed a generosity, and profusion, which I have not often seen. The first course consisted of three roasted lambs, two of which were stuffed. These were followed by three turkeys: and six partridges, six fat pullets, six pigeons, and a dozen quails, formed the third course. The table was then covered with fruits, sweet-meats, almond and pistachio tarts, and a variety of other delicacies. A long ride over steep hills had sharpened our appetites, and we did honour to every dish; especially as we did not want for good wine. I here drank, for the first time, the *vin de loi* (y), which is but little known in France, though it well deserves to be so.

To render the entertainment complete, a

(y) The name the French give to a white wine made by the Jews at Retimo. The grape grows on the hill-sides, exposed to the hottest rays of the sun. This wine excites a generous warmth in the stomach, and has a delicate fragrance and flavour, not resembling any of our wines in France.

virtuoso

virtuoso of the country was sent for; this was a Turk, who played on the violin during part of the entertainment. These men do not know a single note of music, but play intirely from memory, and often from imagination; and execute every air, and every idea, which may happen to occur. Sometimes he played a series of gay, lively, and light tunes, which were very pleasing; but more frequently, his mournful and melancholy music, imitating the plaintive accents of the romance, excited in the mind a more profound feeling. This musical *improvvisatori* was, in some respects, truly astonishing; his performance was greatly varied, and some of his passages, which were extremely tender, compelled, if I may use the expression, both the heart and the ear to listen to his melodious tones. He was very celebrated at Retimo; and I am of opinion that even at Paris he would not have been heard without pleasure.

With our host's good will we should have passed the night at table; but as we were to set out the next day, we were shewn up stairs at midnight, to very neat apartments, where we found soft and convenient beds, which seemed

to

to invite sleep. The God was lavish of his favours, and shedding his salutary balm on our wearied limbs, infused through us the warmth of a new life.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET.

L E T T E R XXVII.

To M. L. M.

RETIMO is the ancient *Rhitymnia* of Stephen the geographer. Ptolemy calls it *Rhitymna*. It is a handsome town, situated at the entrance of a rich and fertile plain. It is not large, and scarcely contains six thousand inhabitants. A citadel, built on a rock, which projects into the sea, would be sufficient for its defence, were it not commanded by a high hill, from which it might be battered with artillery. The harbour, which is nearly choaked up, is only capable of receiving barks and small vessels. The Turks never trouble themselves to prevent or repair the ravages of time, and behold with unconcern the most useful works become heaps of ruins. Their harbours, therefore, are every where filling up, and the commerce they attracted deserts them, to seek more commodious situations. The French had formerly a vice-consul at Retimo, to which place the ships of Marseilles came to take in oil; but, for a long time past,

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they

they have not been able even to approach the town, and the government have withdrawn an officer, who now can be of no use.

It is nevertheless much to be wished that the port of Retimo may be restored. The plains around it abound in various productions; and oils, cotton, saffron, and wax, are extremely plentiful; all which different branches of commerce would become still more extensive, could the inhabitants convey their produce to a foreign market. Their gardens produce the best fruit in the island. Their pomegranates, almonds, pistachio-nuts, and oranges, are excellent. Here we find the apricot-tree that produces the *mich mich*, a fruit of an exquisite fragrance, and yielding a delicious juice. It is a kind of alberge, but more mellow and smaller than that of France.

Five leagues from this town, an immense country opens between the western extremity of Mount Ida and the first chain of the White Mountains. In this large valley is the village of Marguarites, the most populous of any in the island; which contains about ten thousand Greeks, who cultivate the rich adjoining plains, and would carry their oils, grain, and other commodities, to Retimo, if they

they had a harbour. This village, or rather town, is about two leagues distant from the northern sea, and not far from the road to Candia. Close to it flows a small river, which falls from the mountains in cascades. The charming temperature, and varied productions of this beautiful country, invited the Venetians to settle there. They had built country houses in this district, where they passed a part of the year; several of which are still to be seen; but it is with regret we find them occupied by ignorant Greeks, or barbarous Turks. Nothing remains but the ruins of those gardens which art designed, and nature delighted in decorating with a perpetual succession of flowers and fruits. The Greeks of Marguarites, instructed, no doubt, by their ancient masters, have preserved the art of extracting an agreeable liquor from the olive. In any other part of the country, the thick and coarse oil would never suit the palate of a Frenchman accustomed to that of Provence. The oil made at Marguarites, which is manufactured with more care, is very good, and retains a taste of the fruit, and an agreeable flavour. This rich valley, and large village, are the appenage of the Sultana Walida, who sends thither

an officer to collect their tributes: the Pachas of Retimo and Candia have here no authority.

We quitted Retimo, laden with presents from the Jew merchant, who gave us a stock of provisions for our journey. On leaving the town, we had two leagues bad road, cut out of the rock. Descending from these heights, we coasted the sea-shore for three leagues; and, though our horses feet sunk into the sand, we got forward very fast. When we had gained the back of the White Mountains, the point of which forms to the north the promontory of Drepanum, we were obliged to keep continually climbing up steep rocks, and descending into deep vallies. This was a very fatiguing part of our road, but we refreshed ourselves on a verdant grass plat, which owed its freshness to a neighbouring spring, while the branches of a few olive-trees sheltered us from the sun. We had recourse to the provisions of the good Hebrew, and did not spare them. We had been informed, that in a house to which our guides were to conduct us, the French consul had prepared a supper for his successor, and this flattering prospect rendered us lavish of our stock; which
imprudence

imprudence we had afterward reason to repent.

We now once more cheerfully mounted our horses, and rode six leagues through frightful roads: we had forsaken the usual route, wandering, we scarcely knew whither, among the mountains, and were a hundred times on the point of falling head long from the precipices. We crossed a river, where our horses were almost obliged to swim; and, to complete our misfortunes, night was coming on, and we could hardly see our way. When the darkness was still more increased, we were forced to commit the care of our lives to the sagacity of the animals we rode on. At length, however, we arrived, at the wished-for village, and entered, in high spirits, the house where we thought we were expected; but the French consul, who was old and avaricious, had not kept his promise, but, contrary to the received practice of his brethren, had totally forgotten us; and, as the inhabitants were all in bed, we could get no kind of provisions. After long search, however, we did, at length, procure a few olives, eggs, and some very bad bread; with which necessity compelled us to be content. While

we were making this sorry repast, our tantalizing memory continually upbraided us with the {supper of the night before. In this disagreeable situation, you may suppose, the old consul was not without his share of our benedictions. We all of us lay down with our boots and clothes on, on mats, the floor, or wretched mattraffes, as we could, and endeavoured to find, in the enjoyment of sleep, the only remedy for our misfortunes.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET.

L E T T E R XXVIII.

To M. L. M.

THE house where we had passed the night was only two leagues from Palio Castro, situated at the extremity of Cape Drepanum. Murtius (z), in his map of ancient Crete, places here the Museum, where was decided the famous contest between the Syrens and the Muses; and lays down Aptera at a little distance from it toward the mountains. Other authors have imagined that the situation of that city is pointed out by some ruins still remaining at Palio Castro: but both these opinions are without foundation; since Strabo precisely ascertains the situation of Aptera, by placing it at four leagues distance from Cifamus, which served it as a harbour; and as the latter town was at the bottom of the bay formed by the capes Spada and Sufa, upwards of twelve leagues from the promontory of Drepanum, it is impos-

(z) Murtius, Dissertation on the Isle of Crete.

fible that Aptera should have been situated near that Cape.

The hardness of our beds, Madam, not allowing us a long sleep, we rose before day-break, and set out at three in the morning. We quitted our quarters without regret, and thought only of reaching Canea, from which we were distant five leagues. At about a mile and a half from the village, we had a deep river to cross, and it was still quite dark, but our guides taking the lead, we followed them. To regain the great road which we had left the day before, we traversed a hilly country, where scarcely any thing like a beaten path was to be found. We followed each other in a line, and very slowly. The darkness caused the hills to seem to us of a dreadful height, and a valley had the appearance of an abyfs. But these illusions were presently dissipated. Day-light appeared, and we began to distinguish objects, and soon after the sun rose above the mountains. The sight of that glorious luminary awakened our drowsy senses, and dispelled the phantoms of night. His resplendent beams now enlightened the cliffs of a rock,
and

and now gilded the foliage of the trees on the hills, or the summit of a tower. By degrees the whole plain received his rays, and the magnificent scenery of nature was fully displayed. In this glorious moment, how is man reanimated to new enjoyment, while he contemplates, in delightful ecstacy, the wonders of creation ! The pleasure produced by the sight of the rising sun, is universal, and extends to every creature ; the birds fill the air with their melody ; the cattle low in the plain ; the bleating lambs sport around their mothers ; the inhabitants of the waters play upon the surface ; and all animals express, in their peculiar manner, the lively joy they feel.

When we had reached the main road, we discovered the bay of La Sude, and the castle which defends the entrance ; while beyond it appeared the craggy rocks of Cape Melec. We descended into the plain that leads to Canea, and a league from that town the vice-consul came to receive us. A beautiful horse, richly caparisoned, was brought for the new consul ; and ranging ourselves in two lines, we entered the walls of the ancient Cydon. The Turks, as a token of rejoicing, poured coffee under the feet of our horses.

We

We arrived at the gate of the Consular-house, and thus terminated our journey, in which we had visited the most curious places in the island. I have since seen many others that merit particular descriptions, and which I shall endeavour to describe to you in the course of the following letters.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXIX.

To M. L. M.

THE city of Canea, Madam, is the ancient Cydon, or Cydonia. Strabo points out precisely its situation (*a*). "Cydonia," says he, "is seated on the sea shore, on the side opposite to Laconia." Diodorus agrees with this geographer, in the position he assigns to the cities built by the ancient Minos (*b*). "Cnossus is situated on the side opposite Asia. Phæstus on the southern shore, and Cydon on the west side of the island, facing Peloponnesus." This corresponds exactly with the present situation of Canea; and Geography informs us of no other considerable town on that side. The Cydonians possessed an excellent harbour, which they shut in with a chain; and the entrance of the port of Canea is extremely narrow, and consequently would

(*a*) Strabo, lib. x.(*b*) Diodorus, lib. x.

be very easy to defend by such a contrivance.

The origin of Cydon is uncertain (*c*). Stephen of Byzantium says, "it was first called Apollonia, because Cydon was the son of Apollo." (*d*) Pausanias attributes its foundation to Cydon, son of Tegetes, who passed into Crete. (*e*) Herodotus asserts, that it was built by the Samians, and that they erected the temples it contained. (*f*) Alexander, in the first book of the Cretans, says, it received its name from Cydon, son of Mercury. You perceive, Madam, that this diversity of opinions precludes all certainty; yet may it not be wholly unimportant to endeavour to ascertain, with precision, the founder of this city.

We know that Cydon was possessed of great power (*g*), and successfully carried on a war against the combined arms of the Cnossians and Gortynians. (*h*) This was the largest

(*c*) Stephen Byzant.

(*d*) Pausanias in Arcadicis.

(*e*) Herodot. lib. iii.

(*f*) Scholiast. in Apollonium, lib. iv.

(*g*) Liv.

(*h*) Phranzes, lib. i. cap. 36.

city in the island, and inclined the scale in favour of the party whose cause it espoused. It sustained several celebrated sieges (*i*). Phalécus, prince of the Phocians, passing into Crete with a fleet and a numerous army, besieged it both by sea and land, and lost before its walls his army and his life. Metellus, having subjugated the island, turned all his forces against Cydon; and, after a very vigorous resistance, at length rendered it subject to the Romans.

Cydon was built on the scite of the modern Canea, and extended half a league beyond it, on the side of St. Odero, where we still see, on the sea shore, remains of ancient walls of a very solid construction. Canea, built by the Venetians, is only two miles in circumference. It is surrounded on the land-side by a simple range of walls of great thickness, and defended by a deep and wide ditch, cut out of the rock. By deepening it a little more, the sea might be made to flow round its ramparts, on which cavaliers are raised, the better to command the plain. It

(*i*) Pausanias in Phocicis.

has but one gate, that of Retimo, covered with a half-moon, which is the only out-work. The town is better defended toward the sea. On the left of the harbour are four batteries, one above the other, mounted with heavy brass cannon, on which are the arms of Venice. The first of them is on a level with the water. The right side is defended only by a great wall, built on a ridge of low rocks, which are dangerous to approach. At the extremity is an old ruinous castle ; below which the Venetians had erected superb arsenals roofed with stone. Each of these vaults has sufficient length, height, and width, to admit the building of a ship of the line. The ground here has a declivity ; and the extremity of these noble arsenals is on a level with the sea, so that nothing was more easy than to launch their vessels. The Turks suffer this magnificent work to go to ruin.

The town of Canea is well laid out ; the principal streets are as straight as a line, and the squares are decorated with fountains. It possesses no remarkable edifices. The greatest part of the houses have only one story, and are built with terraces : those which are
round

round the harbour, are ornamented with galleries, which afford a most charming prospect. From the windows we may discover the great bay formed by the capes Melec and Spada, with all the vessels entering or leaving the port. The harbour admits ships of two hundred tons burthen; and, if deepened, would afford good anchorage to the largest frigates. The entrance is exposed to the violent north winds, which sometimes drive the waves over the ramparts; but as it is narrow, and the bottom good, vessels well moored are in no danger.

Canea contained five or six thousand inhabitants when Tournefort travelled in Crete; but since the ports of Gira Petra, Candia, and Retimo have been choaked up, the merchants have retired to Canea, which, it is estimated, now contains about sixteen thousand souls.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T.

LETTER XXX.

To M. L. M.

THE Turks who inhabit Candia, Madam, are not so implicitly submissive to the orders of the Grand Signior as those of the other provinces of the empire. We are almost tempted to believe that the air they breathe inspires them with a republican spirit : they mutually support each other against the tyranny of the Pachas, and refuse to bow their necks to the yoke of despotism. Inrolled as janissaries at their birth, they compose the principal soldiery of the island, and it would be dangerous to drive them to revolt. When their governors have been guilty of oppression, they have been known to have recourse to arms, and demand vengeance. Of this we have just seen a remarkable example : the Pacha of Canea had a kind of deputy, who, like the rest of those in office, made use of

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every

every means to amass wealth, and drew on himself the detestation of the people. The Greeks did not dare to murmur, but submitted in silence to be the victims of his injustice. The Turks were not so patient; they brought their complaints before the governor, and informed him of the tyranny and extortions of his minister; but either because he had a real friendship for him, or was a sharer in his plunder, he would not listen to them; when on a sudden, on the 6th of January, we heard a great tumult in the town. The janissaries ran through the streets sabre in hand, crying, To arms! And as, in such circumstances, foreigners are always in danger from a licentious populace, we kept ourselves shut up in the consular-house, waiting the event.

The house of the officer of the Pacha, which was a spacious building lately finished, was opposite to ours, on the other side of the harbour. This was presently filled with upwards of five hundred persons, pillaging and destroying every thing that fell in their way. Some tore out the sashes, and threw them upon the quay: others mounted on the terraces, broke down the parapets; while some were returning loaded with furniture. A

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great number of them were diligently searching to discover the object of public hatred; and in less than two hours the whole house was emptied, and half demolished.

An enraged multitude always proceeds to excesses, which no one can foresee. The soldiers took possession of a high fort which commands the town, whence they could thunder on the castle of the Pacha, against which they pointed several heavy pieces of cannon, and after leaving a guard at this post, proceeded in a body to demand justice, resolved, in case of refusal, to bury their governor under the ruins of his palace. The whole town followed with dreadful shouts, which, reaching the ears of the Pacha, who was an old warrior, rendered respectable by many gallant actions, he had himself conveyed in an arm-chair into the middle of his courtyard; and when he saw the storm approaching, and that the furious populace were preparing to break down the gates, ordered them instantly to be thrown open. At the sight of this venerable old man, who had a long white beard, the mutineers were struck silent, and the most daring among them seemed motionless with astonishment. At length,
none

none venturing to speak, "Well, my good people," said the governor, "what do you ask of me?" They all cried out, "We must have the head of your deputy." "He is fled," replied the Pacha; "but if you find him, I abandon him to your vengeance; return to your duty, lay down your arms, and let every man go peaceably home." This firmness awed even the most riotous; and a rebellion, which might have had fatal consequences, was appeased in an instant, by the courage and prudence of a single man. He had however concealed his favourite, and, in the night, sent him on board a ship, which immediately set sail for Constantinople. After his departure, things returned to their usual channel, and peace was once more restored within the walls of Canea. This revolt had occasioned us no little uneasiness; for had the inhabitants proceeded to extremities with their governor, they would not have spared the French merchants, and the loss of property would have been the least of their misfortunes.

Some time after, we were witnesses to another scene, less alarming, indeed, but which will enable you to form an idea of the man-

ner in which the Greeks are treated in this country. They are not permitted to enter a town on horseback. This honour is reserved to their archbishop, and Europeans. The bishop of Canea attempted to brave this tyrannical law; and one evening returning from the country, with several Monks, did not dismount; but, passing the guards, galloped on to his house. The janissaries, stationed at the gate, considered this action as an insult. The next day, they related to their companions the affront put upon the True Believers, and came to the resolution to burn both the bishop and his priests. They immediately procured combustibles, which they carried to his house, uttering a thousand imprecations; and these unhappy ecclesiastics were on the point of suffering a cruel death, when the Pacha, apprized in time, diverted the rage of the multitude, by issuing a firman, proclaimed through all the streets of the town, by which every Greek, of whatsoever condition, was forbidden to sleep within the walls of Canea. This order was rigorously obeyed, and every evening these wretched slaves were to be seen ignominiously stealing out of the gate of Retimo,

to

to seek an afylum in the neighbouring country. The working-men and the poor, unable to hire apartments, were obliged to take shelter in the crevices of rocks, or lay under trees on the bare ground. The women were not included in this prohibition, but were permitted to remain in their houses; an exception which does great honour to Turkish gallantry, but which furnished a subject for many witticisms. However, when this nightly exile had continued two months, the husbands began to talk of making their peace; and as money here is the remedy for every evil, they joined their purses, and having raised a large sum, obtained a revocation of the order, after paying very dearly for the pride of their bishop.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

L E T T E R XXXI.

To M. L. M.

WHEN we travel through different countries, Madam, or even through distant provinces of the same kingdom, the change of air is perceived by us in a very sensible manner. This impression indeed is greater or less, according to the greater or less degree of sensibility of every individual; nor does it wholly depend on the accidental circumstances of cold or heat. We feel, in respiring the vital element, an odour, a taste, a flavour, which vary according to circumstances, and the varieties of climates and seasons. These sensations produce pleasure, or an uncomfortable feeling, as they are suitable or contrary to the actual state of our constitution; nor are we to esteem this extraordinary: the exhalations from the earth, waters, plants and flowers, incorporate with
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the atmosphere, and compose the air we breathe. Every man of understanding, therefore, who has any regard for his health, ought not to be indifferent concerning the choice of his habitation, since on it, in a great measure, depends the preservation of that most valuable blessing.

The instant I landed on the coast of Alexandria, I inhaled a fiery air, with which I was nearly suffocated; I felt a moist and debilitating heat, which rendered me languid, and deprived me of all strength of body, or vigour of mind. I concluded it was impossible I could live in such a country; but a copious perspiration presently taking place, the violent heat of my blood diminished, and I soon found myself greatly relieved.

In the beginning of spring, when the orange-trees round Damietta were in flower, and filled the atmosphere with their fragrance; when heat, as yet only moderate, left the body in possession of its energy and activity, I tasted, in the most lively manner, the charms of so delicious a temperature, breathed with rapture a fresh and perfumed air, and every pulsation of the heart was an enjoyment. This
pleasure,

pleasure, though every moment repeated, never produced satiety.

In the same places, when, in the month of July, the husbandman had turned up the mud of the morasses to plant his rice, the atmosphere became loaded with exhalations which oppressed the breast, and obstructed respiration. The faces of the inhabitants were discoloured; sickness became general; and had not the northerly winds, which prevail at that season, chased away the malignant vapours, and the earth been very soon covered with harvests, the most violent distempers would, no doubt, have ensued.

In fact, so large a river as the Nile flowing through, and periodically inundating Egypt, cannot but render the air humid, which humidity moderates the heat of the sun, and renders the country habitable. The air there is very salutary to the lungs; disorders of the breast are unknown (*k*); and Galen, who

(*k*) I have said, that asthmatic disorders are not known in Egypt. This is true with respect to the inhabitants, and persons coming from Europe, Asia, and the northern coasts of Africa; but the Abyssinians, and Nubians, who inhabit a much hotter climate, become sometimes asthmatic

who studied at Alexandria, and was well acquainted with the nature of the climate, sent thither all his patients with pulmonary complaints, and they commonly found the cure they sought.

Among all the countries, in which I have resided, there is none whose temperature is so healthy, and so agreeable, as that of Crete. The heats there are not excessive; and violent cold is absolutely unknown in the plains. By the observations which I made at Canea, during a whole year, I found that, from the month of March to the beginning of November, the thermometer only varied from 20 to 27 degrees (of Reaumur's scale (1)) above the freezing point. This variation is not considerable; besides that, in the hottest days of summer, the atmosphere was refreshed by the sea-breezes. The winter, properly speaking, begins only in December, and ends in January. During this short season, snow never falls in the plain, and rarely do you see the surface of the water frozen. The

matic at Grand Cairo. These facts have been certified to me by physicians who have resided forty years in the country.

(1) From 77 to 93 of Fahrenheit.

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weather

weather is more commonly as fine as in the beginning of June in France. The name of winter is given to these two months, from the heavy rains, the cloudy sky, and very violent north winds, which happen at this time of the year ; but these rains are highly useful to agriculture, since the winds drive the clouds towards the high mountains, where the reservoirs of water are formed by nature to fertilize the country, and the inhabitant of the plain suffers nothing from these transient variations.

No sooner is the month of February past, than the earth is adorned with flowers and harvests. The rest of the year is almost one continued fine day. We never experience, as in France, those cruel returns of piercing cold, which, coming suddenly after the heats, nip the opening flowers, destroy the fruits of the year, and are so prejudicial to delicate constitutions. The sky is continually bright and serene, and the winds are mild and temperate. The glorious luminary of day runs his majestic course through the azure vault, and ripens the luxuriant fruits of the hills and plains. Nor are the nights less beautiful : a delicious coolness then prevails, and the air,
less

less charged with vapours than with us, discovers a greater number of stars to the observer. The blue vault of heaven sparkles with gold, diamonds, and rubies, which seem to dart forth brighter fires. Nothing can be more magnificent than this spectacle, which the Cretans enjoy for ten months of the year.

To the charms of so delightful a climate, are added other advantages which enhance their value. The island of Crete has hardly any marshes. The waters there are never stagnant, but, flowing from the summits of the mountains in innumerable streams, form delightful fountains, or small rivers, which lose themselves in the sea. The elevation of the ground, whence they take their rise, causes them to have a rapid course, and they form neither lakes nor ponds. For this reason, insects cannot deposit their eggs in them, which would be carried to the sea; and the inhabitants are not tormented, as in Egypt, with those clouds of gnats that fill the houses, and of which the sting is so painful. For the same reason, also, the air is not loaded with those dangerous vapours which rise from the marshes in wet countries.

The hills, and rising grounds, are clothed
with

with various species of thyme (*m*), savoury, serpolet, odoriferous rock-roses, and a variety of balsamic plants. Myrtles and laurel roses border the rivulets which meander through the vallies. On every side the country presents you with groves of orange, lemon, and almond trees. The Arabian jessamine blooms in the gardens, which in the spring are decorated with beds of violets. Vast fields are covered with saffron; wild dittany, which has a very fragrant smell, lines the crevices of the rocks: in a word, the mountains, valleys, and plains, exhale on all sides aromatic odours, which perfume the air, and render it delicious to respire. Clouds, ice, and snow, are afflicting objects, which throw a mournful veil over the face of nature; they present to the eye gloomy images, and excite in the mind melancholy reflexions, and painful feelings in the heart. Nay, not unfrequently, they are injurious to health, and produce a general indisposition. But a clear sky has an effect the very reverse. The sight of an unclouded sun inspires man with joy. His

(*m*) We find in the island of Crete three sorts of thyme, one with a white flower, the other red, and the third blue. All of them are very odoriferous.

genial

genial warmth revives him, and infuses that lively cheerfulness, which springs from the conscious feeling of the happiness he enjoys. In this state of mind every object acquires new beauty. He contemplates with more pleasure the luxuriance of the harvests, and admires with greater enthusiasm the beautiful tints of the flowers ; he finds a double sweetness in their perfumes ; and, delighted with his own existence, seems to communicate, to every thing around him, the happiness he enjoys. The youth begins to be animated with a new life, and feels himself softly attracted towards another self ; his heart palpitates with inquietude and delight, and the tender passion of love fires all his senses. While the aged man, now safe in the harbour, recollects the tumultuous struggles of his younger days, and feeling himself revived by a sudden warmth, would be ready to encounter them anew, did not prudence and nature soon calm the temporary effervescence of his passions.

In these countries, Madam, we are more sensible of the truth of such reflexions. It is certain, that in this delightful climate man is less subject to diseases, enjoys more pleasures,

fures, and has infinitely more means of being happy than in the northern regions, where the cold is extreme ; or even in our climates, where the winter, though not so long, is sometimes very severe.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L. E. T.

L E T T E R X X X I I .

To M. L. M.

THE beauty of man, Madam, his powers, and his health, depend, in general, on the climate he inhabits, his food, and the nature of his occupations. In Crete, the Turk, who is not tormented by ambition, or the thirst of wealth, whose mind is never occupied by the chimeras of intrigue, who knows not envy, which debases the soul, nor exhausts himself in the pursuit of the sciences, to which we too often sacrifice our health ; the Turk, I say, who lives on wholesome and simple aliments, and passes his days amid the flowery fields he cultivates, and in the bosom of his family who obey and revere him, grows and rises into a Colossus. The salubrity of the air he breathes, the sweet temperature he enjoys, the delightful scenes perpetually before his eyes, and the peaceful life he leads, all contribute to strengthen his body, and preserve his vigour even beneath the snows of age. Hither the sculptor, devoted to his art, and
emulating

emulating the ancients, should come in search of models. He would see young men of eighteen or twenty, five feet six, or eight inches high (*n*), who possess all the graces peculiar to their time of life. Their muscles have still a little plumpness, which will soon assume a bolder character; their cheeks, gracefully rounded, display an animated carnation, and their eyes are full of fire; their chin is covered with a light down, never violated by the razor; their air is full of grace and dignity; and their whole carriage, and every gesture, bespeaks health and vigour.

In men arrived at maturity, the features and outlines are more developed. Their legs are naked; and when their robes are lifted up, the muscles appear boldly prominent: their arms exhibit those signs of strength which were visible in those of the ancient Athletæ: their shoulders are broad, their chests full, and their necks, never straightened by the ligatures, which, from infancy, confine those of the Europeans, retain all the beautiful proportions assigned to that part by nature: no tight breeches, or garters, bind their legs below the knee; that part of their

(*n*) About six feet English.

leg, therefore, is never distorted or contracted, nor is the knee too prominent. In a word, all their limbs, unaccustomed to the fetters which confine our motions, and which habit alone could render supportable, preserve their natural form, and that admirable symmetry which constitutes male beauty. When they stand erect, all parts of the body properly support each other. When they walk, they move with an air of dignity, and bodily strength and firmness of mind display themselves in every gesture. Their majestic eye announces that they are accustomed to command. Pride and severity may sometimes be apparent in their looks, but meanness never.

The Mahometans, who inhabit the island of Crete, are such, Madam, as I have here pourtrayed them. They are, in general, from five feet and a half to six feet high (o). They resemble the ancient statues; and, in fact, such were the men the artists of antiquity took for their models. It is not, therefore, wonderful they should have surpassed us, having a more beautiful nature from which to copy. One

(o) French measure, answering to from five feet eleven inches to six feet five English.

day, as I was walking with an officer in the environs of Canea, he exclaimed, at the sight of every Turk that passed, Oh! were I only permitted to choose here seven hundred men, I should have the finest regiment in France!

In a country where the men are so remarkable for bodily strength and dignity of aspect, you may justly conclude, Madam, that the women cannot be wanting in beauty and the graces. Their dress does not prevent the growth of any part of the body, but is accommodated to those admirable proportions with which the Creator has decorated the most lovely of his works. All are not handsome; all do not possess charms; but some of them are extremely beautiful, particularly among the Turks. In general, the Cretan women have a luxuriant bosom; a neck gracefully rounded; black eyes full of fire; a small mouth; a nose perfectly well made, and cheeks which health tinges with the softest vermillion. But the oval of their faces is different from that of the women of Europe, and the character of their beauty is peculiar to their nation. I will not attempt a parallel between the two. Whatever is beautiful deserves our homage, though delicacy of sentiment

ment should ultimately fix the taste of a man of just feeling.

During the first year or two of my travels in the eastern countries, accustomed as I had been to the elegant head-dress of the ladies of France, their curls, and different coloured powder, I could not endure the black hair of the oriental women, and their dress seemed to me to give them a harsh and forbidding air. So difficult is it for reason to disengage itself from the fetters of habit, that I long continued the slave of this prejudice. But, after more mature reflection, their long black locks, artificially plaited, without either powder or pomatum, and which neither spoil their dress, nor soil the furniture of their apartments, appeared to me well calculated to heighten their beauty. Their ebon colour seemed to give more lustre to the fairness of their complexions, and the glow of their cheeks. The rose-water, with which they wash their hair, exhaled an agreeable perfume; and I was delighted with the natural beauty of their tresses. I then changed my opinion, and could not help wishing the European women would not spoil one of their most charming ornaments with the colours of art, so much inferior to

those of nature. How much more lovely would the fair beauty appear, adorned with the pale gold of her flowing locks! How would the dark hair of the brunette, arranged with art, set off the roses of her cheeks! These, Madam, are the observations of a traveller, who, by comparing the different customs of nations, has been able to banish his prejudices, and is convinced that nature alone is truly beautiful; but he sets little value on, and entreats your excuse for, the reflections in which he has here ventured to indulge.

You must not be surpris'd, Madam, that I have not mentioned the Greeks who inhabit the island of Candia, who partake with the Turks the advantages of a serene sky, a pure air, and happy temperature. They enjoy, indeed, in common with them, these precious blessings; but they are oppress'd by tyrants. They live in perpetual anxiety and apprehension, and frequently terminate their miserable lives in despair. Excepting the Spachiots, who are less expos'd to tyranny, these unfortunate beings have neither the lofty stature, nor the strength, nor the beauty of the Turks. The stamp of servitude is visible in their faces; their looks are crouching, and
their

their features distorted by knavery and meanness. Such is the character of those Cretans, who were once so jealous of their liberty; those experienced and intrepid warriors, who were courted by all nations; and those friends to the arts, which they cultivated amid their shady groves. At present, cowardly and indolent, they live in debasement, and we may read in their degraded countenances, that *they are slaves.*

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXXIII.

To M. L. M.

THE island of Candia, Madam, does not produce, like Egypt, a multitude of reptiles. Very few serpents, and those only small ones, are to be found in it. Belon, the naturalist, reckons three species, the *ophis*, the *ochendra*, and the *ephloti*. The first is not venomous; but I can say nothing of the others, only I never heard of any accidents from their bite.

The ancients affirmed, that this beautiful country contained no noxious animal (*p*). Pliny excepts the tarantula (*q*), which Belon calls *phalangion* (*r*). They assert its poison is mortal. It is a sort of spider, almost an inch long, with a scaly coat. It hollows out, in the sides of little eminences, a pretty deep

(*p*) Antigonus Aristhius, Hist. cap. x. It is said, that the island of Crete breeds no animal which can cause the death of man.

(*q*) Pliny, lib. viii. cap. 58.

(*r*) Observations de plusieurs Singularités et Choses memorables trouvées en Grèce, &c.

hole,

hole, which it covers with a strong web of cross threads glued together. This little passage, at the bottom of which it lodges, is closed externally by a valve, that prevents the rain from penetrating; and which it opens when going in quest of insects, and closes again when it re-enters. If two of these tarantulas are shut up in a glass phial, they sting each other, and die soon after. I am not acquainted with the effect of their bite on the human body, but I was an eye-witness to the experiment I have just mentioned.

The quadrupeds of the island are not mischievous; we neither meet with lions, tigers, bears, wolves, nor even foxes; in short, no dangerous animal. The wild goats are the only inhabitants of the forests which cover the high mountains, and have nothing to fear but the gun of the hunter. Hares are found on the eminences and in the plains. The sheep feed in safety on the various species of wild thyme. They are folded every evening, and the shepherd sleeps in peace, free from the dread of seeing death and havock spread among his flock by wild beasts.

It is a happiness for the Cretans, that they
are

are neither troubled with musquitos, nor have any thing to apprehend from the poison of serpents, or the ferocity of wild beasts. The young and lively maiden may dance upon the grass, without finding, like Eurydice, a viper concealed under the flowers. The ancients ascribed these signal advantages to the birth of Jupiter. "The Cretans," says Ælian (*s*), "celebrate in their songs the bounties of Jupiter, and the favour he has granted their island, his native and nursing land, of being free from every noxious animal, and of not even nourishing those which may be brought into it."

Among the medicinal plants of Crete, dittany holds the first rank. It is astonishing how highly the ancients have extolled its virtues. Theophrastus (*t*), who gives us the received opinions of his time, says, "Of all the known plants, which the earth has produced, dittany is the most precious." The father of medicine, the celebrated Hippo-

(*s*) Ælian. de Natura Animalium, lib. v.

(*t*) Theophrastus adds, in another place, Dittany possesses beneficial and extraordinary virtues in a great number of cases, and especially in the labour of women.

crates (*u*), ordered an infusion of it to be given in several disorders of women, and especially during the pains of a difficult labour. For this reason the statue of Diana was, according to some writers (*v*), crowned with dittany.

I shall not here repeat, with several authors (*w*), that the wild goats, when wounded by the arrows of the hunter, freed themselves from them by eating this precious plant; that it possessed the virtue of healing them, even when the arrows were poisoned (*x*); and that its odour was so powerful, as to drive away venomous reptiles, and destroy, if it only touched them (*y*). These accounts are evidently exaggerated; but, on the other hand, we are, possibly too indifferent to the real utility medicine might derive from this plant. Its leaf is extremely balsamic, and the flower diffuses

(*u*) Hippocrates de Nat. Mulierum: Give, as a drink, dittany of Crete, of the weight of an obolus, infused in water. He adds (de Morbis Mulierum), lib. i. Give dittany of Crete in wine. De Fœtus Mortui Exsect. If you have any dittany of Crete, drink an infusion of it.

(*v*) Scholiast. in Euripid. Hippolyt.

(*w*) Plutarch, de Sol. Anim.

(*x*) Cicero, de Natura Deorum, lib. ii.

(*y*) Dioscorides.

a de-

a delicious fragrance. The inhabitants, at present, apply it with success on many occasions. An infusion of the dried leaf, with a little sugar, yields a liquor more pleasing to the palate, and more finely flavoured than tea. It immediately removes languor of the stomach, and restores it after digestion.

(z) Dittany is peculiar to the island of Crete, and is to be found in no other country. It grows in the crevices of the rocks, and at the foot of precipices. Pliny has not sufficiently discriminated it in his description (a). "Dittany," says he, "has slender branches, resembles penny-royal, and is hot and rough to the taste; its leaves only are made use of; it has neither flower, nor seed, nor stalk." Virgil knew it better, and his description is more conformable to truth (b). "His mother gathers dittany on Mount Ida of Crete. This plant bears shagged leaves, which are crowned with purple flowers. The wild goats find in it a

(z) Pliny, B. xxv. ch. 8. Dittany grows only in the island of Crete. Theophrastus (Hist. Plant.) says the same thing: Dittany is peculiar to the island of Crete.

(a) Pliny, lib. xxv. cap. 8.

(b) Æneid, lib. xii.

"remedy,

“remedy, when wounded by the winged
“arrows.”

In a country where the air is extremely pure, disorders are not frequent; we find no epidemical diseases in the island of Candia. Fevers are, indeed, frequent there, in the summer; but they are not attended with danger, and the plague would never make its appearance, had not the Turks destroyed the Lazarettos established by the Venetians for performing quarantine. Since then it has been brought, from time to time, by the ships from Smyrna and Constantinople. This dreadful distemper perpetuates itself for want of precautions, visits successively the different provinces, and, as both the heats and colds are moderate, sometimes continues its ravages here for eighteen months together.

But a malady which, though less dangerous than the plague, has something even more hideous in its symptoms, infects this beautiful country: I mean the leprosy. This disorder had its ancient seat in Syria, whence it has passed into many islands of the Archipelago. It is contagious, and is instantly communicated by the touch. The unhappy wretches, who are attacked by it, are confined to little
huts,

huts, built on the sides of the highways, from which they are not allowed to come out, or to converse with any person. They have usually round their cottages a small garden, that supplies them with vegetables and poultry, with which, and the alms they receive from passengers, they drag on a miserable life in torment. Their bloated skin is covered with a scaly crust, full of red and white spots, which occasion intolerable itchings. They intreat relief in a hoarse and hollow voce, at the very sound of which you shudder, and their words are scarcely articulate, as the disorder is internally destroying the organs of speech. These wretched spectres gradually lose the use of their limbs, and live till, the whole mass of blood becoming corrupted, death is the consequence of putrefaction. No sight can be more melancholy, or more shocking than that of a leper; no torments comparable to those which he endures. It would be an act worthy of a humane physician, to endeavour to discover a remedy for this dreadful and contagious distemper.

The rich are not attacked by this malady, which is confined to the lower class of people,
and

and is particularly frequent among the Greeks, who observe strictly their four Lents, and live during that whole time on nothing but salt-fish, boutargo (*c*), pickled olives, and cheefe, and drink copiously of the heavy and heating wines of the country (*d*). It is possible this diet may inflame and thicken their blood, and, at length, be the cause of a leprosy. I am led to suspect this, from observing, that it never manifests itself among such of the Turks as are rich enough to procure animal food the whole year, with rice and vegetables; nor even among the Greeks who inhabit the mountains, and eat frequently of fallads, fruits, and milk.

You perceive, Madam, this terrible disorder is not to be dreaded by persons in easy circumstances. During a whole century that the French have been settled in Canea, not one of them has ever suffered from it; and as it appears to originate from the wretched nutriment of the Greeks; by obliging them to change their manner of living, this disease might possibly be eradicated. Our ancestors

(*c*) The roe of fish salted and smoaked.

(*d*) These wines are of a very hot quality, and cost only three farthings a bottle.

brought

brought it with them into France, at their return from the Crusades, and discovered the method of cure. It is, therefore, little to be doubted, but the Cretans, under the regulations of a wise government, might be able entirely to banish it from the island.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T.

L T T E R XXXIV.

To M. L. M.

A RESIDENCE of sixteen months in Crete, has given me an opportunity, Madam, of attaining a more perfect knowledge of this fine island, than travellers, in general, can pretend to, who have only taken a hasty view. At a distance from all the entertainments and diversions which amuse the Parisian, I have endeavoured, in my leisure hours, to discover situations where I might enjoy the beauties of the country. I wish, Madam, to present you with the description of one in particular, to which I frequently repaired, attracted by the pleasing prospects it afforded; but let me entreat you to remember, that the more faithful I shall be, the more will the scenes I shall depict be suspected of the marvellous. I am not afraid, however, you should think them imaginary; the places I am about to describe, really exist; I myself have seen and felt their beauties in different seasons

seasons of the year. May they cause you to forget, for a moment, the rich gardens of Montreuil, and for a while fix your attention on the banks of the Platania!

Quitting Canea, and following the sea-shore to the south-west, we leave on the right the Lazaret, a low rock, where the Venetians obliged vessels to perform quarantine, before they were admitted into the harbour. A league further on is the rock of Saint Theodore, on which not a stone remains of the two forts by which it was defended, when attacked by the Turks. This little island, and that of the Lazaret, were anciently called *Leuces*, and are famous for the contest the Syrens dared to maintain against the Muses, with whom they disputed the palm of vocal and instrumental music; but being overcome, threw themselves into the sea.

Coasting the gulph, we discover to the west a long chain of mountains, which follow its windings, and terminate in a point at Cape Spada, formerly the promontory of Dictynna. These are a branch of the white mountains, to which Strabo gives the name of Corycus. About the middle of this chain is the temple of Dictynna, erected by the ancient Cretans,

on the spot where she cast herself into the sea, to avoid the pursuit of Minos (*e*).

Let us continue our expedition, regardless of the fables of antiquity. We approach the river of Platania, and the forest of the same name; we are now three leagues from Canea. To the west we have the sea, and the hills with which it is surrounded, and to the east a thick wood. Between the shore and these trees is a sandy soil, a quarter of a league in width, interspersed with beautiful laurel-roses. Nothing can be more lively than the verdant lustre of their leaves; nothing more magnificent than the purple flowers with which they are crowned. But the sun beats hot on the sands; the shade invites; let us repose under its covert.

Heavens! what a delightful scene! what verdant, what beautiful foliage! A vast forest of plane trees, few of which are less than seventy feet high! they are larger than our elms, and no less majestic. How they unite their fraternal arms! How do they mutually support and defend each other against tempests and hurricanes! All hail to the ancient forest

(*e*) Murtius, Dissertation on Crete.

of Platania! Every tree has vines planted round it, whose shoots, four inches in diameter, rise like the ropes which secure the masts of a ship. In this rich and productive soil they shoot with an astonishing vigour, and, growing to the height of the planes by which they are supported, crown them with their verdant tendrils, and adorn them with their fruit. Each tree, thus decorated, forms a large arbour, impenetrable to the rays of the sun. Seated under this magnificent canopy, the traveller sees clusters of grapes pendent over his head, many of which are two feet in length. They are of various species; and by the side of a yellow cluster, we frequently admire the purple, the violet, the rose, and the muscadine of a deeper, or lighter hue. These grapes, which embellish the Platanus with their beauteous varieties, have a very large berry, and ripen two months later than those which grow on the hill-sides; but they adorn the tables of the inhabitants till the month of December, and are of an exquisite flavour. I know no place more delightfully pleasant than this forest. In spring, innumerable birds resort thither, to build their nests: the nightingale, the goldfinch, and the blackbird,

blackbird, seek its shades, where they woo in peace their little loves, and make the echoes resound with their melodious warbling.

Close to the edge of this wood flows the river of Platania. It is not deep, and the pure sand, which forms its bed, is easily discoverable through its transparent waters. The foliage of the plane-trees, and the clusters with which they are hung round, are reflected in this crystal mirror. Sometimes, taking its way between two rows of trees, its darkened stream glides in silence under the thick overhanging branches; then, suddenly escaping from its prison, the face of heaven is again imaged in its peaceful waters. It was in this limpid stream, says the fable (*f*), that Europa, fatiated with the favours of Jupiter, went to bathe her beauteous body, while her nymphs danced in chorus, and chaunted hymns to Love. No place can be imagined more favourable to the tenderest of passions; nor any where the heart overflows more with pure enjoyment, or feels more the want of another self to participate its delights. O thou! who, seated beneath the flowery shades of Bourbon,

(*f*) Murtius, Dissertation on the Isle of Crete.

fang Eleonora, whose darling name has attracted the admiration of distant nations, come to Platania; come to admire and paint the charms of this retreat; and, if you would render it immortal, here love, here celebrate another divinity! Acknowledged songster of the Graces, beloved poet of Apollo, remember that this is the ancient country of the Muses; here reside, and you will imagine yourself in the bosom of your native land.

Let us penetrate into the thickest of the wood. What profound silence! what gloomy majesty! Darkness here reigns amid the clearness of the day. Here is the habitation of obscurity, peace, and coolness. They have fled the burning hills, where the shepherd, from the depth of his grotto, warbles forth his strains, and have taken refuge under this impenetrable foliage. But why does a secret shuddering seize on the mind? Is this then the temple of the deity? And is the soul awed by his sacred presence? Or, rather, does it dread some undiscovered enemy? Yet does it experience a kind of pleasure in what so agitates its feelings. Is this agitation then necessary to make us more sensible of our existence?

Let us continue to stray under the arbours
of

of Platania, and ascend toward the source of the river. For the space of a league we perceive almost always the same richness of soil, and the same delightful landscapes. In some places the two hills, which embrace the forest, widen, and afford distant views of eminences, clad with vineyards ; cottages built on their summits ; and perpendicular rocks, which seem ready to rush into the valley. The goat, which sports on the brink of the precipices, is browsing on the leaves of the shrubs which grow on them, and seems suspended over the abyss.

We are now at the extremity of the forest. Before us opens a plain, three leagues in circumference, bordered on every side with lofty hills. Above rise the White Mountains, which hide their frozen heads in the clouds. From every point of the horizon, narrow and deep valleys terminate in the plain, to which they convey the tribute of their waters. Their course is marked out by the laurel-roses, the beautiful flowers of which decorate the sides of the valleys with a brilliant red ; they are so many superb garlands, hung by nature to the summits of the hills, and which, suspended in long folds, reach to the very foot of the descent.

descent. These wreaths of roses form a charming contrast with the surrounding verdure, and never can the eye be wearied with admiring them.

Let us now turn our attention to another principal ornament of this delightful scene. You have, Madam, handsome myrtles in your gardens, but they languish under a foreign sky. One part of the year they are shut up in hot-houses, for their delicacy is unable to support the frost. The pots or boxes in which they are confined, will not permit them to receive sufficient nourishment to become vigorous, or to display their odoriferous flowers; but what they especially want is the sun they love; his genial heat is indispensable to their perfection. Hither, Madam, must you come to view in perfection the beautiful tree so dear to the son of Cytherea. In the place I am describing, and which I shall call the plain of myrtles, you may see them ten feet high, and covered with blossoms from the ground to the very tops. Their snow-white flowers, bordered within with a purple edging, appear to peculiar advantage under the verdant foliage. Each myrtle is loaded with them, and they emit perfumes, more
sweet,

sweet, more exquisite, than those of the rose itself; they enchant every sense, and the soul is filled with the softest sensation. Sometimes, in this immense plain, we find them growing in thick groves; to walk in which is most delightful. In other places they are seen scattered here and there; but wherever we turn our eyes, we can never be wearied with admiring the beauty of their foliage, and inhaling the delicious odours of their flowers. Twenty times have I reposed under their shade, and as often have I tasted a new delight. The ancients certainly were in the right, when they consecrated the myrtle to love, since it surpasses in beauty every other shrub or tree.

A rivulet traverses the whole extent of this plain; but it has but little water, except during the winter. Its banks are adorned with laurel-roses, which grow best in a moist soil. The vivid colours of their blossoms, which are seen through the interstices of the flowery myrtles, form a picture worthy of the ablest pencils. But the pleasure of the eye is not equal to that communicated by their delicate odours. You leave them, to seat yourself at
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the foot of the myrtles, which, on a closer examination, appear more charming.

Every part of the island of Crete, Madam, is not so pleasant and beautiful, as that I have here described. The myrtle and the laurel-rose grow every where in the valleys; but I never saw these beauteous shrubs collected in such abundance as in the plain which terminates in so picturesque a manner the forest of Platania. If you do not find, in modern poets, descriptions similar to mine, it is not their fault, but that of the country they have before their eyes. The happiest imagination could never form such pictures as I have presented you, without having seen the originals; it must have recourse to foreign ornaments, at the expence of the most essential beauty. The ancients, on the contrary, depict scenes, which, to those who have not travelled, seem no better than the dreams of a brilliant imagination. Yet, on visiting the countries they inhabited, we see, with pleasure, that, studying after the finest models, they have copied with fidelity the genuine beauties of nature. They have, indeed, allowed themselves some licence in the disposition of their ornaments, by collecting

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ing in one landscape all the charms to be found in many; but they have, nevertheless, taken care not to lose sight of probability, by stationing each object in the place it ought to occupy, and imagining nothing but what is possible. The most frequent error of those who have not well examined nature, is to unite incoherent beauties, and distort what they mean to embellish.

I know not, Madam, what may be the fate of the descriptions I now send you; but I sketched them near the banks of the Platania, and in the plain of myrtles. There I now enjoyed the shade of the plane-tree, while the purple clusters hung over my head; now inhaled the delicious odours of the blooming myrtle, and now contemplated with rapture the beautiful flowers with which the laurel-rose adorned the valleys. Charmed with the scenes, breathing a pure and balmy air, I have endeavoured to describe, in this silent retreat, the sentiments and emotions of my soul, and the reflections resulting from the sight of so many delightful objects.

I have the honour to be, &c.

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L E T T E R · XXXV.

To M. L. M.

I AM now going to introduce you, Madam, to one of the most amiable Turks in the island, nor can I suppose you will be displeased with your new acquaintance. Ismael Aga, one of the wealthiest land proprietors in Canea, is a man of about seventy years of age, of a majestic stature, a fine face, and still exhibits in his features the marks of strength and vigour. He has had the command of several of the Grand Signior's caravelles, and passed some time at Venice; he has travelled through Egypt, and visited, according to the religious custom of the Mahometans, the tomb of his Prophet. His travels have entirely divested him of that pride, with which ignorance, and the prejudices of their religion, inspire the Turks, nor does he, like them, despise strangers; but, on the contrary, takes pleasure in, and courts their society.

society. Having invited us to spend some time at his country house, he sent horses for us, and ordered his sons to shew us the way. We accordingly set out from Canea at eight in the morning, crossed that beautiful part of the country covered with olive-trees, which extends to the foot of the White Mountains, and having rode through the whole length of the delightful plain of myrtles, arrived about noon at his house, situated a league beyond it, on the declivity of a hill. Ismael received us with friendship, but without any of those demonstrations of joy and pleasure which ceremony lavishes in other countries. You are welcome, said he, with an air of cool satisfaction; and immediately conducted us to the place of entertainment.

The heavens were clear and serene, but the atmosphere was heated by a burning sun, to which we had been four hours exposed: nothing could now be so desirable to us as coolness; and our wishes were amply gratified. The table was spread in the garden under the shade of orange-trees. Six of these beautiful trees, planted in a circle, united their branches, which had never been mutilated by the sheers, and formed over our heads a
 roof

roof impenetrable to the rays of the sun. In the middle of a very hot day, we enjoyed, in this arbour, which nature had so profusely embellished, a delicious coolness. On every side, flowers hung in garlands over the guests, and formed a crown for each. The brightness of their colours, their exquisite odours, the beauty of the foliage, gently agitated by the zephyr, every thing conspired to make us imagine ourselves suddenly transported to some enchanted grove. To complete the whole, a beautiful stream, which descended from the adjoining hills, passed under the table, and contributed to preserve the pleasantness and coolness of our arbour; on each side of us we beheld it gliding over a golden sand, and winding its crystal stream through the garden, in which a great number of small canals had been dug to convey its waters to the orange, the pomegranate and almond trees, which repaid the moisture they received with interest, in flowers and fruits.

The table was now served; the Aga had endeavoured to provide for us suitable to our tastes; we were presented with all the utensils common in France; and our host himself conformed

conformed to all our customs. Knowing that we were used to take soup, he supplied us with a great dish of roast-meats covered with a delicious jelly. Round this were bartavelles almost as large as our hens, and with a *fumet* which excited the appetite: there were besides excellent quails, a tender and delicate lamb, and hashed-meat dressed with rice, and perfectly well seasoned. The wine corresponded with the excellence of the rest of our entertainment; we were served with *vin de loi* (g), malmsey of Mount Ida, and a sort of perfumed red wine, equally agreeable to the smell and the taste. Our good patriarch, wishing to imitate his guests, and take his glass in defiance of the Prophet, had sent away his servants, and his children. Laying aside the Turkish gravity, which never condescends to smile, he chatted with much vivacity, and frequently astonished us by the

(g) The wine made by the Jews is called *Vin de Loi*. or wine of the law, and is little known in France; it is rather bitter, but leaves an agreeable flavour in the mouth, and excites a gentle warmth in the stomach.

The Malmsey of Mount Ida is more unctuous, more agreeable to the palate, and not less fragrant.

pene-

penetration of his understanding, the aptness of his replies, and the justness of his ideas. When the dishes were removed, we were presented with Moka coffee, and pipes. Do not be too much shocked, Madam, the pipes made use of here are of jasmine, and the part applied to the mouth, of amber; their enormous length entirely takes away the pungency of the tobacco, which, in Turkey, however, is mild; and, being mixed with the wood of aloes, produces a vapour neither disagreeable nor incommodious, as in other countries.

We reposed ourselves agreeably under the shade, and enjoyed the delicious fragrance of the orange flowers; our host was extremely social, and took the lead in the conversation. No offer was here made to shine, by those flashes we call wit, to ornament splendid nothings in gaudy colours, or to disseminate agreeable scandal. To attempt this would only have been to lose time. Ismael would have understood nothing of our jargon. We were obliged to content ourselves with listening to solid observations, and returning answers according to the dictates of reason, and sound sense. As soon as the great
heat

heat was over, he called his sons, and ordered them to attend us on a shooting party; we descended into a plain where we found plenty of quails, and had the pleasure of killing many without fatigue. The darkness, which now advanced over the hills, brought us back to the house; and, as the nights at this season are as clear and fine as the days are beautiful, we supped in the arbour of orange-trees. Rarely do we enjoy this luxury in France; the night air has always a degree of chillness that makes us shudder, or a copious dew falls injurious to health. In Crete, during the Summer, you are not exposed to those inconveniencies, which though trifling, interrupt the enjoyment of the company. The sky was without a cloud, the coolness agreeable, and the air so calm, as scarcely to disturb the light of four large wax-tapers, which illumined the foliage in a thousand different ways, and the varied reflections of which produced lights and shades of an admirable effect. Here the leaves shone upon, assumed a brilliant yellow, and there a deep verdure, while in some places the whiteness of the flowers, suspended in festoons, was heightened by a golden ground;

ground ; further on, the opening of two leaves left a passage for the resplendence of a star, which sparkled like the diamond. The condensation of the air had collected the fragrant perfumes of the flowers and shrubs, and every sense was delighted. The luminous coruscations which played upon the foliage, and the contrast of light and shade, which continually varied its form and colours, produced a scenery so delightful, that this flowery canopy extended over our heads appeared to me more beautiful by night, than amid the splendor of day. Perhaps, too, the delicacy of our good cheer, the excellence of the wine, and the novelty of the decorations, might give new vigour to imagination, and that enchantress might take a delight in still further embellishing so voluptuous an abode.

The Turks do not reserve in their houses separate apartments for every person of the family ; the women only have distinct chambers ; the men sleep together in spacious halls, on matresses spread on the carpetting, and provided with sheets and a blanket. Agreeable to this ancient custom, still observed by the orientals, we were shewn into a large room, round
which

which our beds were placed upon the ground. Only two centuries ago, it was usual, even in France, for the whole family to pass the night in the same apartment: since that time, our manners have undergone a great change; they have infinitely more delicacy and convenience, nay, perhaps decency; but are they more social?

The day had scarcely begun to break, when the servants came to awaken us; for the Mahometans rise with the dawn, to repeat the morning prayer, and to enjoy the first rays of the sun, and the delicious coolness diffused throughout the air. When we came down from our chamber, breakfast was waiting for us; we drank moka, smoked the odoriferous tobacco of Latakia, and, accompanied by the sons of the Aga, and two game-keepers, made an excursion to shoot partridges. I have only seen one species of that bird in this island; the bartavelle, which inhabits the mountains, where it multiplies prodigiously; its colours are more lively, and it is much larger than our red partridge, and excellently well tasted: we found innumerable coveys of these birds on all the hills. Our morning was fatiguing, but very successful. Fre-

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quently,

quently, after straying over eminences covered with briars, we descended into a valley overspread with myrtles and laurel-roses. The game retires into such places during the violent heat of the sun, and we sprung partridges, quails and hares, from the midst of these flowery thickets.

On our return to the Aga's, an excellent dinner, the malmsey of Mount Ida, and our delightful harbour, made us forget all our fatigues. His women paid us a gallant attention, by the present of a large cake made with their own hands; it was composed of flour, perfumed honey, fresh almonds, and pounded pistachio-nuts, mixed with a little rose water: this pastry was very light, and we all allowed it to be excellent.

During the whole time we passed at the seat of Ismael Aga, we experienced from him nothing but the utmost politeness; he made us no great compliments, but he studied our tastes; and we were sure of finding on our table the dishes to which we seemed to give a preference. One morning rising before my companions, and walking among the neighbouring orchards, I perceived this venerable mussulman standing near a fountain contiguous

to

to the house: he was washing his face and hands, and chaunting the first chapter of the Koran, that is to say, one of the finest hymns ever addressed by man to the Supreme Being (*b*). He seemed intirely absorbed in the adoration he was paying to his Creator; and I conceived a favourable opinion of a man, who fulfilled, with so much dignity, the first of all duties.

This Turkish nobleman possessed several other country-houses. That to which we were invited he only occupies in the spring; for he passes the violent heat of the summer in a charming retreat, situated among the mountains. There, while the sun scorches up the plain, and the whole atmosphere seems on fire, he enjoys a delicious temperature; and beholds the country round him clad in verdure, and covered with flowers and fruits.

Such, Madam, is the life led by the rich Mahometans in Candia: they pass three-fourths of the year on their estates, and repair in winter to the towns, to sell the su-

(*b*) The chapter called *the Introduction*, which serves in fact as a preface to the Koran: it breathes that sublimity, that ancient simplicity, which seems to be the proper language of man to the Almighty.

perfluity of their produce; the oil, which they make in great quantities, the wax, the wine, and the wool of their flocks, procure them very considerable wealth. Content with their possessions, they aspire after none of those public employments which might endanger their safety, but see them, without envy, in the possession of strangers. Uncontrolled monarchs on their own estates, they command and receive implicit obedience. Possessing the handsomest women of the island (*i*), they bring up their numerous offspring, in the respect and submission due to the chief of the family. These Mahometans, enjoying without pain, anxiety, or ambition, all the bounties offered them by nature, pass their days in tranquillity and happiness, and retain, even in a

(*i*) The Turks are not scrupulous in their means of obtaining women: when a Greek has a pretty daughter, and has the misfortune to let her go out of the house alone, that moment they carry her off, and marry her. They do not force her to renounce her religion, if she appears much attached to it; but all the children are Mahometans. I saw at Canea a handsome Greek girl, who had been carried off in this manner from her family. At her husband's death, she returned to her relations; but her children were mussulmen, and she was obliged to separate from them.

very

very advanced age, almost unimpaired good health.

I shall long remember, Madam, the agreeable hours I spent at the country seat of Ismael Aga; yet I must confess to you, that amid the pleasures I was enjoying, I could not suppress a feeling of regret for the absence of the fine arts. To this, however, the Mahometans are insensible; but a Frenchman cannot but deplore a want so essential, in one of the finest countries in the world. Were this island the country of a polished people, how would it change its appearance! How much more delightful would its gardens become! What delicious shades would the hand of an able artist there form! How would he display, in brilliant cascades, those rivulets which rush naturally from the hill-tops! How conjoin the scarlet of the pomegranate-tree with the white of the orange flower! How would the myrtle and the laurel-rose then interweave their branches, and their blossoms, and the charming lilac vary the beauteous mixture! How would those elegant shrubs, distributed in clumps, compose groves unequalled for the fragrance of their flowers, the variety of their colours,

colours, and the diversified tints of their foliage. Under these smiling arbours, the poet would feel himself inspired by the Muses, breathe rapturous strains dictated by the Graces, and chaunt hymns to Love. Amid such wondrous natural beauties, letters would flourish as in the days of Anacreon, whose brow was perpetually crowned with roses. Pardon me, Madam, if I thus yield to the pleasing dreams of my imagination: alas! I fear I shall not be able to produce the like in the foggy atmosphere of the Seine.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T -

L E T T E R XXXVI.

To M. L. M.

QUITTING Canea, Madam, the traveller sees before him the White Mountains (*k*), at present called the hills of Sphachia. This chain of eminences is in height second only to Mount Ida, which is the most extensive in the island; they begin at Cape Drepanum, to the eastward of La Sude, and extend as far as the southern sea, where the little town of Sphachia is situated, and defended by a small fort, that serves to frighten away the Corsairs. From this elevated centre two branches strike off, which take their course toward the ancient Peloponnesus. These terminate in a point, and form the Capes Spada and Sufa (*l*), which are the most western points

(*k*) The ancients called this chain of mountains *Leuci*, or White Hills. Strabo, lib. x.

(*l*) These western branches of the mountains of Sphachia

points of the island. These secondary branches are steep, abounding in perpendicular precipices, and by no means fertile; flocks, however, are fed on them, and we here and there find scattered, cypresses, pines, and various evergreens. The villages on them are little frequented, and thinly inhabited; and we meet with no remarkable town. At the bottom of the bay, inclosed by these mountains, is the small town of Cifamo, the ancient Cysamum, with a wretched harbour and a ruinous castle. Near the promontory of Sufa, is the fortress of Grabusa, built on a low rock: the Venetians defended it for a long time against the whole force of the Ottoman empire, and might still have possessed it, but for the treachery of one of its governors, who sold it to the Turks for a barrel of sequins. Between the rock and the continent, vessels of all sizes find excellent anchorage. But let us now quit these wild and desolate places, and return to the White Mountains.

Sphachia were formerly called Tityrus and Cadiscus. The hills of Tityrus formed the promontory of Dictynna, the modern Cape Spada; those of Cadiscus, the promontory of the same name, now called Cape Sufa.

These

These hills form, in the front of Canea, an immense rampart, the summit of which is lost in the clouds, and seems to separate that city from the rest of the island. The lowest chain is but two leagues from the town, and may be about six hundred yards high. Between that and the second, opens out a vast plain three leagues in diameter, and of considerable length; this intermediate chain is far higher than the former. Beyond are lofty peaks, to which, without doubt, the name of the White Mountains was given from their being, during a part of the year, covered with snow, which, collecting in heaps, in the deep valleys, on the north side, hardens, and never melts: the inhabitants cut it in large pieces, which they bring to Canea in the night, and thus enjoy the luxury of drinking iced liquors in the hottest days of summer.

These mountains are an appenage granted by the Grand Signior to the Sultana Walida, and are intirely independent of the government of the Pachas. The Sultana sends a person she can confide in, to govern there, and collect the tributes. The Greeks who inhabit them are called Sphachiots; they rear
numerous

numerous flocks of goats and sheep, keep bees, make excellent cheese, which has the taste of Parmesan, and sell what they do not consume themselves, in the neighbouring towns and villages.

The Sphachiots, confined to their mountains, are more distinct from the different nations who have possessed Crete, than the inhabitants of the plains: they speak a dialect less corrupt than the rest of the Candiots, and have retained several customs of their ancestors, and certain peculiarities of their ancient character. When Belon travelled among them, they were the best archers in the island; they had very large bows, and displayed more address, strength, and courage, than the other Greeks. Even now the musquet has succeeded to the bow, they are not less skilled in the use of the latter; and in general are excellent marksmen.

Of all the Cretans, the Sphachiots alone have retained the Pyrrhic-dance; this they perform, clad in their ancient dress, that is to say, a short robe bound with a girdle, breeches and buskins; a quiver, filled with arrows, is fastened over their shoulder, a
bent

bent bow hangs on their arm, and by their side they have a long sword. Thus accoutred, they begin the dance, which has three measures. The first marks the step, and they change feet in dancing like the Germans; the movements of the second are more lively, and resemble the dance of the inhabitants of Lower Brittany; during the third measure, they leap backwards and forwards, first on one foot, and then on the other, with great agility. The dancers, who answer them, imitate the same steps, and sing and dance with them to the same time. In the course of this dance, they perform various evolutions; sometimes forming a circle, at others, dividing, and ranging themselves in two lines, and seeming to menace each other with their weapons. Afterward they separate into couples, and appear as if defying their antagonists to the combat; but, in all their movements, their ear is true to the music, and they never vary from the measure.

You know, Madam, that, in the ancient Cretan republic, the people were divided into two classes, that of the youth, and that of mature manhood; this division is still preserved among the Sphachiots, but not in the
purity

purity of the institution. Formerly the young men were subject to the reproof of the aged, and obeyed them; at present they wish to command. This want of subordination has been productive of great misfortunes to the whole nation. During the last war with the Russians, the Turks imagined that the inhabitants of Sphachia intended to give up the island to their enemies, and pretended that some Russian ships, touching at the southern side of the island, had formed a treaty with the Sphachiots. This was enough to make the Mahometans take up arms. They marched, to the number of eight thousand, and climbed without difficulty the first chain of mountains; but it was not so easy to scale the second, and a handful of men could have prevented them. The class of men proposed to fight, and defend their rocks; but the youth, no doubt seduced by the promises of the Turks, advised submission; and, while their fathers were making head against the enemy, had the baseness to introduce them, by secret paths, to the summit of their mountains. The moment they appeared the Sphachiots took to flight, and concealed themselves as they could in caverns of the rocks, and among the precipices.

The

The musfulmen cruelly abusing their victory, destroyed whole villages, massacred many of the inhabitants, and carried off a great number into slavery; without sparing either men, women, or children. They afterwards sold them in different provinces of the Ottoman empire. The youth who composed the Agelas (*m*) of the ancient Cretans would certainly have acted in a very different manner. We should have seen them fly the first to arms, and repel the enemy far from their habitations, or perish on the field of battle; but never would they have betrayed their country. This example proves, that the best institutions become pernicious when they depart from their original principles (*n*).

I have already said, Madam, that the winter covers the mountains of Sphachia with snow. One morning, in the beginning of February, we left Canea to take the diversion of shooting. The north wind had blown during the night; and, though we enjoyed a very agreeable temperature in the plain, the cold

(*m*) Companies of the youth.

(*n*) Since that unfortunate period, the Sphachiots, who were before exempt from the *Carach*, pay it like the rest of the Greeks.

was

was sharp on the mountains. After proceeding about half a league, struck with astonishment and admiration, we could not but stop to contemplate the superb picture before our eyes. The sun was rising majestically above the summits of the hills, and illumined with his rays a mantle of snow of an immense extent, which descended from their tops to the highest part of the lower eminences. Through the snow the black trunks of the firs and oaks were seen making their way, which, at the distance we were at, seemed as if planted by a line, and assuming the appearance of a long curtain, bounded the horizon in a most picturesque manner. The magnificent mantle, of which they broke the uniformity, illumined with all the rays of the sun, must have been fatiguing to the eye, had it covered the whole ground; but, ending precisely at the last chain of mountains, it formed different folds, following the elevation of the country. Where it terminated, plantations of olive-trees adorned the declivity of the hills, in the midst of which scattered cottages agreeably varied the landscape. Lower down, the scenery was different. Here and there on the plain we discovered

discovered beautiful country houses, some of which were built by the Venetians. Around them the lemon, orange, and almond trees, laden with golden fruit, formed enchanting groves, while innumerable violets growing under their shade, perfumed the air with their delightful odours.

The plain we passed through contained large spaces covered with corn, a foot high, and of an admirable verdure. This beautiful carpeting formed a wonderful fine contrast with that which the severe cold of the night had stretched over the hills. After perambulating, for an hour, amid these pleasing landscapes, we descended into the vale of Laculate, which is very marshy in winter, and intirely uncultivated. But nature has not neglected its embellishment. For the space of a league, the earth was covered with yellow and white narcissuses, of the liveliest hues, which diffused around the most fragrant odour imaginable. Wherever the ground was somewhat more elevated, it exhibited a profusion of other ornaments; white anemonies, and violets, yellow, red, and, in short, of every colour, glittered through the verdure.

This,

This, Madam, is not a picture of the imagination: from the summits of the hills clad in the dazzling whiteness of their snowy mantle, to the plain enriched with verdure, flowers and fruits, we had before our eyes all the beauties I have been describing. We contemplated, at one view, the seasons of spring and winter, separated only by an elevation of six hundred yards. I do assure you, Madam, that I add nothing to the painting; and if I have any regret, it is in not being able to express the peculiar emotions every one must experience at the sight of objects so astonishing, collected within the space of a few leagues.

It is true, that in the month of February, Nature, in Crete, is, as I may say, in the bloom of youth; the breath of her lips is pure and odoriferous; her robe is embroidered with the liveliest colours; the gentle dew of the nights, the light of the god of day, which begins to warm her bosom, all contribute to her decoration: but one of her most beautiful ornaments is the innumerable golden-apples, which at that season cover the branches of the orange-trees. These are then

ripe, and invite every hand to pluck them. Their skin is extremely thin, and their juice delicious, the fragrant odour of which remains long after they have been eaten; they are greatly superior to those of Egypt, and even at Malta are preferred to the oranges of that island.

Having thus described the enchanting scenes that presented themselves to our view; we will now, with your permission, Madam, continue our diversion of shooting. When we had traversed the plain of Narcissus, we arrived at some marshes, situated at the extremity of the gulph of La Sude (o). They are nothing but reeds and water, and there is no following the game without boots; but they are inhabited by innumerable snipes, which afford excellent sport. The environs abound in laurel-roses and myrtles, which are in flower almost the whole year, and among these the snipes we had sprung alighted: we here also found water-hens, and in the higher grounds our dogs put up a number of quails.

(o) The Plain of Narcissus, which, with its environs, I have been describing, is usually called *La Culate*.

Wishing to prolong our pleasure, we entered the deep vallies that intersect the last chain of the hills of Sphachia, from north to south. Large woodcocks rose every moment from amid the myrtles and laurel-roses, with which this part of the country so abounds. Here are numerous fountains of water, as clear as chrystal, many of which have been embellished by the Turks, and formed into handsome basons. In this delightful spot, beneath the shade of a plane-tree, surrounded with flowering shrubs, we made our halt, and breakfasted on partridges, excellent wine, some olives, and the limpid water of the spring; we did not, however, give over our sport, but climbed up the dry channel of a torrent, till we came into a plain, which extends as far as the foot of the lower chain of mountains, and in which we found great plenty of the finest partridges and hares. Such, Madam, was the country in which we took the diversion of shooting; but we did not too prodigally permit ourselves this pleasure, and, in general, only indulged in it once a week.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T-

L E T T E R X X X V I I .

To M. L. M.

WE have already, Madam, visited the most beautiful spots to the west and south of Canea. It now remains for us to take a view of cape Melec (*p*), which stretches to the north and east of that town. Its enormous head is seven leagues in circumference, and offers to the navigator nothing but steep rocks, and threatening shoals; but, among its romantic hills on the land side, the traveller finds many places well deserving his attention.

The eastern part of this promontory forms one of the coasts of the gulph of La Sude. Half a league from its mouth, is a rock on which is built the castle of that name, which

(*p*) This cape was anciently called the Promontory of Ciamum.

refisted for fo many years the Ottoman arms. It might easily be battered from the side of Cape Melec, which is only a quarter of a league from the shore, and commands it by its situation. It could not be taken, however, without a squadron, as it has several batteries ranged above each other, hewn out of the solid rock, and is so extensive as to contain a village with about a hundred and fifty houses. Vessels of every size may anchor all round this fortress. But were its artillery well served, and by expert gunners, the most formidable fleet could never force the entrance of the bay, nor escape, if once suffered to enter. The fort of La Sude is one of the most important strong-holds of the island of Candia, and was accordingly that which remained longest in the possession of the republic of Venice.

That part of the bay, which extends beyond the castle, is a league and a half in length, and one-third of a league broad. There is no anchoring-ground nearer than at the distance of half a league from its extremity; and in any other part, no bottom is to be found at a hundred and fifty fathoms. The anchorage, however, is sufficiently extensive

tensive for the most numerous fleet; and ships lie there sheltered from all the winds, and landlocked as in a basin.

The extremity of the gulph of La Sude, called *La Culate*, is only a league and a half from the porte of Canea. They are united by a natural valley, through which it would be easy to open a communication between the two harbours. Nothing more would be requisite than to cut a short canal, which seems to be suggested by the very nature of the ground. This would be of inestimable advantage to commerce. For when the north winds blow, which sometimes detain ships a week at Canea, they might come down the strait of La Sude, and put to sea. Nor would it be less favourable to them at the time of their arrival: vessels which, from contrary winds, were unable to make one of these harbours, might reach the other. Such a canal would also have many other advantages, which I shall not here specify, as plans of this nature will never be executed under the government of the Turks.

Let us now proceed toward the higher part of Cape Melec. This road is very difficult, for we are obliged to climb a number of steep
 I hills,

hills, which lie perpetually barren. On them the sportsman finds as much game as he can wish for; hares and partridges in abundance; but the lover of agriculture views with regret these naked rocks, hill-sides covered with briars, thyme, and an infinity of wild plants, of no utility to man. The foot of the rocks is lined with the cyclamen, or snow-bread, which in the spring covers the ground with its pleasing flowers. When we have passed these rugged and desolate places, we descend into a plain, which owes its fertility and riches to a convent of monks, who have themselves cleared out the lands. They have enriched the barren hills with vineyards, and planted woods of olive, almond, and fruit-trees, which produce them a considerable revenue. On the low grounds they till the best land, and sow it with wheat and barley. The Turks have the justice to respect their property, and though their fields have now attained the highest state of improvement, do not add a farthing to the old and very trifling taxes.

We arrive at the convent of the Trinity by a long alley, adorned with lofty cypresses. On entering the court, which forms a long square, we see the work-shops and cellars of
the

the holy fathers distributed around it. In the centre of this court is a small church, the portal and sides of which are ornamented with orange-trees, forming a noble circular peristyle, and which, when in blossom, fill the air with their fragrance. This monastery is provided with all the utensils necessary for agriculture: they have oil and wine-presses likewise, and every convenience adapted to a rural life. While the priests are offering up prayers to God, and celebrating divine service, the lay-brethren employ themselves in rustic occupations. It is a little republic, which derives its wealth from labour, and of which the members, attached to their respective duties, lead a laborious, but peaceable and happy life. We frequently took up our quarters with these good monks, to be more in readiness for shooting, and always experienced from them the respect and attention of a hospitality which anticipated all our wants.

Leaving the convent of the Trinity, we arrive, after an hour's walk, through very rugged paths, at the monastery of St. John, situated on the loftiest summit of Cape Melec. The level ground, in front of the house, commands

mands the adjacent country. Seated under a single olive-tree, which rises between two rocks, the traveller respire a cool air in the middle of the hottest day of summer, and discovers an immense extent of country. To the south he sees the chain of the White Mountains, crowned with snows and forests; to the west the Minarets of Canea, and to the north the distant point of Cape Spada, and all the vessels which commerce brings into these seas. His ideas expand in proportion to the magnificence of the prospect before him. If he contracts his horizon, he discovers the hill-sides ornamented with vineyards, mountains full of rocky precipices, and in the plain, country houses surrounded by delightful groves. His imagination straying beneath their shade, beholds the fruit suspended from their branches, and the flowers which decorate the myrtles. Absorbed in a pleasing reverie, he views with rapture this enchanting landscape. But, ah! What horrid noise suddenly awakens him from his dream? He hears the hollow sound of the distant tempest; and the dashing of the waves against the rocks suspended over their abyss. Their roaring is tremendous; and they threaten to undermine
the

the foundations, of these huge masses of stone, and engulf them in their waters. How do they foam and lash continually the resounding shore! Surely this is the anger of nature! Adieu, ye smiling shades! delicious prospects, adieu! no longer can you attract the attention of the alarmed spectator. Casting his eyes around him, he discovers nothing but precipices, calcined rocks, and barren hills piled one upon the other, while he shudders at their horrid aspect. Such, Madam, are the different scenes which occasionally present themselves to an observer beneath the olive-tree, before the monastery of St. John.

From this hermitage a narrow path, hewn in some places out of the rock, leads to a grotto, embellished by the wonderful powers of nature. To arrive there, we must continue to descend for half an hour into a very steep valley; but the pleasure amply repays the labour. This vast cavern is full of brilliant stalactites; some of which are of a pyramidal form, while others resemble the pipes of an organ, and, pendant from the roof, seem to threaten the head of the curious examiner. They line all the sides, reflect, like chrystal, the light of the flambeaux; are as polished as glass, and

and extremely brilliant ; but they are not fluted, nor do they hang in festoons, like those of the grotto of Antiparos, the most beautiful in the world. The forms of the latter are much more varied, and their effect, by consequence, far more astonishing.

The apple-sage (*q*), described by Tournefort, grows in abundance along the valley leading to the grotto. The botanist has reason to lament that this learned naturalist remained so short a time in the island, and examined it at a season when the country, burnt up by the sun, could afford him nothing but parched plants. Had he seen it in the spring, he would have enriched his catalogue with several species, which had disappeared before his arrival. The beautiful shrub, known by the name of the ebon-tree of Crete, is found among the rocks on the sea-shore. It does not grow to any great height, but the lively purple flowers, which glitter among its silver foliage, render it very pleasing.

Let us now descend from Cape Melec, and return towards Canea ; in our way, we meet

(*q*) This sage is not confined to this spot. Large tracts of ground are covered with it in Mount Ida.

with

with the convent of Acrotiri, which is a convent of nuns. It is a frightful solitude, in the environs of which nothing is seen but dreary rocks, and at their feet the wild thyme, briars, the thyme with the odoriferous flower, the labdanum, and a few straw-berry bushes. The nuns here are not cloistered, and make no other vow but that of virginity. Each chooses a companion; and, thus coupled, they reside in small houses, built round a chapel, to which a Greek priest comes to say mass. These couples perform all the mutual offices of friendship, assist each other, and possess, in common, an inclosure, more or less considerable, appropriated to the double cell. This is their garden and orchard, in which we find orange, almond, and olive-trees. They likewise keep bees, which are not shut up in hives, and have no covering but planks, laid cross-ways on two posts, beneath which shelter alone these industrious creatures deposit their honey and wax. The first combs are the largest, and gradually diminish to a point. They are all in the shape of an inverted pyramid, and it is surprising how fast they are made by the bees. The honey of these insects is produced from the flowers of the different

ferent kinds of thyme, and an infinity of odoriferous plants and shrubs, with which the country is covered; nor can any exceed it in purity or fragrance.

But to return to our nuns. I have already told you, Madam, that, united in pairs, they inhabit a building, consisting of three or four apartments. Each of these little dwellings contains various conveniences within itself. They have here likewise a vast cistern, a necessary precaution on an eminence without water, a wine-press, an oven, and one or two looms for making linen. They generally rear silk-worms, and gather cotton, which is an annual plant in this country. One of the sisters spins, while the other weaves, and some of them knit stockings. When they have provided themselves with what is necessary for their own use, they sell the remainder of the fruits of their industry, in the town.

In their cells we see neither sumptuousness nor magnificence; we find only convenient utensils, and simple and absolutely necessary furniture, which is kept perpetually clean and neat. In a word, these nuns, without being rich, enjoy a comfortable subsistence, for which they are indebted to their industry.

Cheerfulness

Cheerfulness is their constant companion, and we see among them no melancholy faces. In general, a young sister unites herself to one older than herself, to solace and relieve her from the burthen of the more laborious employments. I frequently visited a Greek lady, who every year passed a few weeks in this monastery, and always found, among these voluntary nuns, a mildness, modesty, and liveliness, very remote from that sour and austere character, which is absolutely inconsistent with virtue.

At the moment I am writing, Acrotiri contains within its narrow precincts the decrepitude of age, the vigour of riper years, and all the charms of youth. I have seen three of these females well deserving to employ the pencil of a skilful painter: a nun of a hundred and nine years old, another of thirty-six, and a novice of sixteen. The first, bent like a bow, with difficulty hobbled along by the aid of a small staff, and seemed every moment ready to sink with feebleness. She had still preserved all her senses, though blunted, and in a kind of stupor; to extract any conversation from her, you must give her a glass of cordial, or of excellent wine, which gradually revived her heart. She told us,
 she

she was born in the village of La Sude; how the Turks had several times besieged that fortress, and how the bombs they threw fell upon the roofs of the houses, and spread terror among the inhabitants. After the taking of the fort, she retired to the convent of Acrotiri, where she has resided near four-score years (r).

The second was tall, with an animated countenance, and elegant features; her air was majestic, her eye-brows black, and her eyes sparkling; but the roses of her cheeks, and the lilies of her complexion, began to fade; she was still handsome, but her beauty was the beauty of maturity; the delicacy and softness of blooming youth was evidently past, and each successive day robbed her of a charm.

The third—you must have seen her, Madam, to conceive a just idea of her beauty, which my powers of description are totally insufficient to convey. Unite, in imagination, all the charms which sometimes adorn

(r) The fort of La Sude was still in the possession of the Venetians, when M Tournefort visited this country, in 1700. They continued masters of it several years after; and it was only taken from them in 1707, or 1708.

the fairest of nature's works, in all their delicacy and perfection, in all their astonishing harmony and grace, and you will have a feeble image of the novice of Acrotiri. Her features had uncommon animation, and her eyes sparkled with a lustre that seemed more than human, and which it was impossible to sustain unmoved. How indescribable must have been her smile, would this beauteous virgin have consented to smile. Transcendent as were her charms, her dress was of the most simple kind, yet it seemed as if no ornament might be added that could embellish her. Every action, every attitude, made her appear still more lovely. Absolutely unconscious of her beauty, she with apparent pleasure waited on the nun, whom she considered as her mother, and anticipated all her desires. Her whole air and manner were free from the slightest tinge of affectation; she appeared absorbed in sublime ideas, and only aspired to the happiness of being received among the nuns of Acrotiri. I cannot deny, Madam, that I was sensibly concerned at the thought of so many charms being for ever buried in the depth of a sad solitude, and that she, who seemed born to give the highest felicity to some favoured mortal,

mortal, should be separated for ever from the society of man ! I went often to the monastery, and never failed to visit the good nun, who was to her as a mother.

Let a painter try what his art can effect, and if he would represent the bloom of youth, the maturity of riper years, and old age in its decrepitude, let him pourtray the three females I have endeavoured feebly to describe. But he must fail in the attempt. To succeed, he must, like me, have seen the originals. The imagination only traces with fidelity what the eye has observed. Then genius meditates and composes, and by its powers becomes creative : for perfectly to represent such objects, is rather to create than to imitate. This was the perfection to which Protogenes attained. The froth, on the mouth of the panting dog, appeared to him imitated, and not natural ; an ordinary artist would have been satisfied, but the Rhodian painter aspired to the perfection of nature ; that is, to be like her creative.

Let us return to Canea, from which we are only a league distant. As soon as we descend the mountain, we pass through a country abounding in all the treasures of agriculture,
smiling

smiling pastures, and plantations of olives and orange trees. Alas! Madam, the riches with which the earth is covered, the beauty of these shades, the flowers and fruits with which the trees are loaded, have no longer any charms for me. Let us re-enter the walls of Canea.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R XXXVIII.

To M. L. M.

THE island of Crete, Madam, is at present governed by three Pachas, who reside at Candia, Canea, and Retimo. The first, who is always a Pacha of three tails, is, as I may say, the viceroy of the island. He is invested with the supreme power, has the inspection of the forts and arsenals, nominates to vacant military posts, and to the governments of La Sude, Grabusa, Spina Longua, and Gira Petra (s). The governors of these forts are called beys. They have under them a governor of the castle, and three general officers, one of whom is general of the artillery, the other of the cavalry, and the third of the janissaries.

(s) Gira Petra, formerly called *Hierapithna*, was a city with a harbour, situated on the south side of the island. At present it is but a small and wretched town, only the smallest vessels can enter the harbour; and the fortress, which is incapable of defence, serves merely to frighten away the Corsairs.

The

The council of the Pacha consists of a Kyaia, who has great influence in all public affairs, and the disposal of almost all appointments; of the Aga of the janissaries, who is colonel-general of the troops, and principal superintendant of the police; of two Topigi-Bachis (1); of a Defterdar, treasurer-general of the imperial claims; of the keeper of the imperial treasury, and of the first officers of the army. It is plain, therefore, that this government is purely military; and, which is the natural consequence, that the power of the Pacha Serafquier is absolute. There is no appeal from his sentence, which is instantly carried into execution.

The great officers of the law are, the Muphti, the supreme head of religion, and the Cady. The former expounds the laws relative to the partition of property among children, inheritances, and marriages; in a word, all those laid down by Mahomet in the Koran; and decides on every thing respecting the ceremonies of the Mahometan religion. The Cadi cannot pass sentence in disputes originating in these laws, until he has obtained, in writing, the opinion of the Muphti, which

(1) General of the artillery.

is called a *faitsa*. His office, therefore, is to receive declarations, complaints, the presents of individuals, and to decide in the common cases of litigation. The Pacha must consult these judges before he can legally put a Turk to death; but when he has attained the dignity of three tails, he often raises himself above the law, and at once dictates the sentence of death, and orders it to be carried into execution by his own authority.

Each mosque has its Imam, a sort of curate, who performs divine service; and school-masters are distributed in different quarters of the town. These men are greatly respected in Turkey, and bear the title of Effendi (*u*).

The following is the number of troops of which the garrison of Candia consists.

Five companies of Janissaries, the number of which varies.

Twenty companies of Jerli, of one hundred and twenty men each.

Two companies of Isdarli.

(*u*) Effendi is a title of honour, bestowed on persons considered as deserving respect.

Four

- Four companies of gunners.
- Four companies of cavalry.
- Four companies of volunteers.
- One company of bombardiers.
- One company of miners.

In the whole forty-six companies, composing an army of about ten thousand men. All these troops are not in the town, but would be collected in an instant. They receive their pay regularly, and punctually, every three months, except the janissaries, whose officers alone are paid. The different posts in this militia do not depend on the Pacha. All promotions are regulated by a council of each company, consisting of the officers on duty, and the veterans. These offices can only be held two years, except that of the *Sorbagi*, or captain, which is purchased at Constantinople, and held for life. The *Ousta*, or cook, is continued likewise in his employment as long as the company are contented with his services. There is a chaplain, or *Imam*, to every company.

The garrisons of Canea and Retimo, regulated on the same plan, are much less numerous

merous. The first consists of about three thousand men, the other of fifteen hundred. But as all the male children of the Turks become members of the corps of janissaries at their birth, their number would greatly augment in time of war. There is not much, indeed, to fear from them, the greatest part having scarcely ever seen a musket fired. They are never exercised in military evolutions, and are totally ignorant of that dreadful art, which in our days has been brought to such perfection, and which, reduced to certain rules, triumphs, without difficulty, over blind force and numbers.

A Pacha of Canea, who distinguished himself in the last war with the Russians, was desirous to try the skill of the gunners of that garrison. He ordered a bark to be anchored, at the distance of half a mile from the walls, and a large barrel placed on the deck. The sea was perfectly calm, and the mark exceedingly distinct; but, notwithstanding a reward was offered to the person who should knock it down, the gunners kept firing the whole day, without touching either the barrel, or the boat.

The

The Pachas of Canea and Retimo are not less absolute, within the limits of their governments, than the Pacha of Candia. They enjoy the same privileges, and their council is composed of the same officers. These governors are only intent on rapidly enriching themselves, and use every means to extort money from the Greeks, who are oppressed in a manner not to be described. But, to say the truth, these unhappy people stretch out their willing necks to the chains that weigh them down. Their envious disposition is continually arming them against each other. If one of them has had the good fortune to acquire a little property, others endeavour to discover something of which to accuse him before the Pacha, who avails himself of these dissensions, to rob both parties. It seems as if the Greeks, dejected and debased by their misfortunes, were no longer capable of a generous sentiment; nor are they in the least amended by the cruel examples they have every day before their eyes.

It is not, therefore, surprising that, under this barbarous government, the number of Greeks should daily diminish. At present Crete is supposed

supposed to contain, at most, only 150,000
Sixty-five thousand of whom pay
the carach (*).

The Turks, though they have only
possessed the island one hundred and
twenty years, as they are not sub-
ject to the same oppression, have
multiplied, and flourish on the ruins
of the vanquished. Their number

amounts to - - - 200,000

That of the Jews only to - - 200

Total 350,200

Is it not astonishing to find so few inha-
bitants on this island, which is above two hun-
dred and fifty leagues in circumference? Is not
this diminution of men a sufficient proof of a
destructive government? I am aware that Crete
is intersected by chains of high mountains,
where we cannot expect any great popula-
tion. But there are rich valleys, and im-
mense plains, capable of being rendered pro-

(*) The carach, as I have said, is the tribute paid to the
Grand Signior by all his subjects, not Mahometans. But it
is levied only on men arrived at maturity; women and
children are exempt from it.

digioufly

digiously fruitful. Nothing is wanting to this teeming soil but labourers and secured property, to make it furnish subsistence for four times the people it now contains.

The hundred cities of Crete have been celebrated by the writers of antiquity, and Geography has preserved to us their names and situations (y). Several of these contained thirty thousand citizens; if, therefore, we allow six thousand to each, on an average, I imagine we shall be rather under than above the true number.

This calculation will give for the hundred cities - - - - - 600,000

We may also estimate the Cretans dispersed in the towns and villages, at the same number - - - 600,000

Total 1,200,000

This cannot be esteemed an exaggerated calculation. When the Venetians were in possession of the kingdom of Candia, it is said

(y) The cities of Cnossus, Gortyna, and Cydon, must have contained, each of them, at least 30,000 citizens, if we may judge from their power, and the extent assigned them by historians.

to have contained nine hundred and ninety-six villages.

Thus we find that, when Crete was a free country, it maintained eight hundred and forty-nine thousand eight hundred inhabitants more than at this day. But since those happy times, this unfortunate island has been deprived of her laws by the Romans; groaned under the disastrous reigns of the corrupt princes of the lower empire; been ravaged by the Arabs during a hundred and twenty years; exchanged their government for that of the Venetians, and, at length, has been finally subjected to the despotism of the Turks, who, in all the countries they have conquered, have occasioned a frightful depopulation.

I might produce many examples of this destruction. When Candia was in the possession of the Venetians, the towns of Sitia, Gira Petra, Silamo, and Sphachia, were crowded with inhabitants; at this day they are but wretched villages with ruined fortresses, and harbours, nearly choaked up. Candia, the capital of the kingdom, was prodigiously populous, and carried on a very extensive commerce in wines, corn, silks, and wax. It was, indeed,
a second

a second Venice ; but is now almost deserted.

It is true, that the Turks, during a five and twenty years war, destroyed many thousand of the Candiots ; and that the plague, the constant attendant of their armies, followed them into this island, and was the destruction of a still greater number ; but if the Ottoman government had considered men as of any importance, it might have been able, in the course of a whole century of peace and tranquillity, to repair these ravages.

The Turks have left the Greeks the free exercise of their religion, but do not allow them to repair their churches and monasteries, without permission, which is only to be obtained by money, and brings in considerable sums to the Pachas. They have, as formerly, twelve bishops, the principal of whom assumes the title of archbishop of Gortyna. He resides at Candia, which is the seat of the Metropolitan church. Nominated himself by the patriarch of Constantinople, he fills up all the vacant sees of the island (z). He bears the triple crown

(z) These bishoprics are, at present, *Gortyna, Cnossou, Mirabella, Hyera, Gira Petra, Arcadia, Cheronesus, Lambis,*

crown on his tiara, signs in red, and is responsible for all the debts of the clergy. To fulfil these engagements, he levies heavy contributions on the other bishops, and especially the monasteries. He is acknowledged as chief of the Greeks, whom he protects as far as his feeble influence extends. To him the government applies in matters of importance; and he alone, of his whole nation, has the privilege of entering a town on horseback.

I have the honour to be, &c.

Lambis, Milopotamo, Retimo, Canea, Gifamo. They are nearly the same as under the Constantinopolitan emperors.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXXIX.

To M. L. M.

THE olive-tree, Madam, that precious tree, consecrated to Minerva, has almost disappeared from Attica. The Albanians and Turks, who have alternately ravaged Greece, seem to have been intent on destroying it. I have been assured, that, within twenty years, they have cut down two hundred thousand feet of these trees. Is it possible to imagine greater barbarism? Do we perceive any thing resembling this in ancient wars? Thus has the Morea, so rich and flourishing, when possessed by the Venetians, become a poor and miserable country.

The island of Crete has not in this respect suffered the same fate. The olive-trees, which delight in a sandy soil, a mild temperature, and the vicinity of the sea, grow in abundance on the hills, and in the plains. The cold is never severe enough to injure them, and the heat

heat is always sufficient perfectly to ripen their fruit. We meet with some which seem coeval with the soil that bears them; they grow to a vast size, and attain the height of fifty feet. Their produce constitutes the chief wealth of the inhabitants, and their principal branch of commerce. The crops, however, are not equally abundant; in two years, one is generally excellent, and the other moderate. Exclusive of the prodigious consumption of oil by the inhabitants, and especially the Greeks, who make use of it as sauce to vegetables and fish, during the four Lents; besides what the Turks of Canea, instructed by a native of Provence (*a*), make use of in their manufactories of soap, which they export throughout the Levant; besides the great quantity of preserved olives, which are served at every table, the Turks annually load four and twenty ships with oil. These vessels contain, on an average, one hundred and fifty

(*a*) The inhabitants of Candia had no manufacture in their island, and it is not long since a native of Provence taught them to make soap, of which they have now several manufactories at Canea. This betrayer of his country's interest has greatly injured the trade of Marseillés.

tons

tons each, the value of which is L. s. d.
 about 90,000 livres, - - - 3,750 0 0

Five only of these ships be-
 long to foreign nations, and
 their exportation amounts to
 450,000 livres, - - - 18,750 0 0

The other nineteen are of
 Marseilles, and their lading a-
 mounts to 1,710,000 livres, - 71,250 0 0

The French merchants, set-
 tled at Canea, annually export,
 besides, in wax and other articles,
 to the amount of 80,000 livres, 3,333 13 3
 which makes an annual expor-
 tation, from this island, on ac-
 count of the French, to the value
 of 1,790,000 livres, - - - 74,582 10 0

They import to the amount
 of 450,000 livres (18,750*l.*) in
 the cloths of Languedoc, and to
 about 100,000 livres (4,166*l.*) in
 sugar, coffee, English shalloons,
 &c. which make 550,000 livres, 22,916 6 6

Deducting this from the pre-
 ceding amount of exports, we
 shall find that the balance of
 commerce, between France and

the

the island of Crete, is in favour *l. s. d.*
of the latter 1,240,000 livres, 51,666 13 3

The Marfeilles houses, established at Canea, are connected with those of Smyrna and Constantinople, and the balance is paid in Turkish piasters.

Now, as almost all the exports from the island of Crete are made at Canea, where the trading ships of different nations arrive, by estimating at one-third more the articles shipped by the Cretans from their other ports, we shall rather be above than below the truth, if we estimate the total at 2,986,666 livres, 124,444 8 4

This commerce is certainly very considerable for an island of so great an extent. But it is in the possession of the Turks, who are ignorant alike of the arts and sciences; and the Greeks, who, harrassed by every species of oppression, dare undertake nothing, either for private advantage or public utility. The island does not contain a sufficient number of inhabitants for all the lands to be cultivated.

cultivated. We pass over, with sympathetic concern, plains of three or four leagues extent, watered by fertilizing streams, without meeting with the slightest trace of cultivation. Delightful vallies, where the luxuriant earth produces an infinity of wild shrubs and plants, lie waste, for want of hands, encouragement, and industry. The indolent Turk passes his life in the midst of his possessions, without thinking of improvement: and should the Greek obtain permission to clear out a piece of ground; after bedewing it with the sweat of his brow, and at the moment he is about to enjoy the fruit of his industry, his powerful neighbour wrests from him the fruit of his labour. Within these few years, however, several of the land proprietors in the environs of Canea, have become sensible of what is their true interest, and begun a few olive plantations.

When the kingdom of Candia was under the dominion of the republic of Venice, it produced great quantities of grain, amply supplied the wants of the inhabitants, and made considerable exportations to foreign countries. At present the island is obliged to import corn; and I have seen several ships

C c

laden

laden with it arrive at Canea. This is not to be attributed to any change in the soil, which is still warmed by the same sun, and watered by the same streams. The tyranny of the Turkish government must alone be considered as the cause.

Objects of the last importance, which would infinitely extend the commerce of the Cretans, are almost totally neglected. The mulberry-tree thrives admirably in the island, and nothing would be more easy than to rear silk-worms. The little cotton which is cultivated there, is of a very fine quality ; and the wool, though not remarkable for its fineness, is so for its quantity ; yet is there not a single manufacture in the country which may employ these valuable materials ! Little attention, therefore, is paid to the silk-worm ; cotton and flax are cultivated in small quantities ; and never will it occur to the imagination of a Turk, that under a mild and favourable sky, which would allow the flocks to be folded the whole year in the open air, it might be possible, by paying due attention to their feeding, and properly crossing the breed, to obtain wool even equal to that of Spain.

What advantages might not a polished nation

tion derive from an island, which, after satisfying the most essential wants of man, would still farther supply him with every thing that contributes to utility, ease, and even luxury ! How might they extend their various branches of commerce ! What benefits might they not derive from manufactures calculated to give them value ! The delicious wines of the country, so little known, would be in request over the whole world. Its forests of pines, oaks, and cedars, under proper management, would be of use for ship-building. The husbandmen, excited by the hope and certainty of enjoying the fruit of their labours, would clear out vast tracts of waste land, now abandoned to sterility, would sow every species of grain, increase their plantations, and, after enriching the state, live in plenty, in the bosom of their numerous families. Men would multiply without end, in the finest climate in the world ; villages and impoverished towns would again become populous cities ; again would the arts return to their native country ; again would they flourish ; and, in a word, the superb island of Crete revive out of her ashes. To produce this extraordinary, this happy change,

nothing is necessary, but the encouragement and protection of a wise government.

These reflections, Madam, are not the dreams of a heated imagination, or of a traveller who has hastily passed through the country. I continued in the island of Candia fifteen months; I have visited its mountains and its plains; I am acquainted with its productions; I know in what they are susceptible of improvement; and I can assure you, that in the whole world, there is no country that combines so many real advantages. The lofty trees of the frozen regions crown the summits of the mountains; while less lofty hills are covered with the fruit-trees which are common in our climates (*b*); the declivities are embellished with vineyards, producing wines equally various as agreeable; the valleys abound in trees bearing delicious fruits, many of which thrive under the torrid zone, while the plains are enriched with every species of grain the earth produces. Ob-

(*b*) The apple, chestnut, pear, and cherry trees, thrive incomparably on the hills of Crete, and produce fruit; which, if it be not so good as ours, it must not be imputed to the quality of the soil, but to the indolence of a people who know nothing of the art of grafting.

serve,

serve, too, that nature has placed the finest harbours, Palio Castro, under Cape Solomon, Spina Longa, La Sude, and Grabuge, on the east, west, and north sides of the island, as if its commerce was destined to extend to every quarter of the world. I shall add only one word: Crete, placed as it is, almost at an equal distance from Europe, Asia, and Africa, seems the central point of these three quarters of the globe; nor do I believe it possible to assign a more favourable situation.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

L E T T E R XL.

** * The following Letters were intended to form a second volume, in which the author proposed to treat on the other islands of the Archipelago which he had visited. It has not been thought proper to give the public any more than these three letters, the author not having put the last hand to the others before his death.*

To M. L. M.

I HAVE left, for some time, Madam, the island of Candia, and made an excursion into the Archipelago ; I shall now give you an account of this little voyage. I embarked in one of the decked boats with which the Greeks carry on their coasting trade in summer. The eldest son of M. Brest, vice-consul of France, at Argentiera, and two merchants going to Constantinople, were of the party. Our vessel was but fifteen feet long, by five broad, without either cabin or deck ; so that we were obliged to remain exposed to the burning rays of the sun, and sleep in the night without any other covering than our cloaks. A sudden

sudden squall might overset us ; and were the sea ever so little agitated, we must be deluged by the waves. Before they leave the harbour, indeed, these light barks always wait for a fair wind, and then they appear to fly over the surface of the waves. They are built to go both with oars and sails, which is a double advantage.

You may possibly begin to think, by this time, Madam, that this mode of navigation is not the safest, and you are certainly right. But that of the Greeks, who sailed to the siege of Troy, was still less so ; since, if we may believe Thucydides, undoubtedly an authentic historian (c), their vessels were without decks. They were, therefore, obliged to coast along the shore, and navigate from cape to cape ; unable to keep the sea with open barks, which the first wave might have sent to the bottom, they dragged them upon land at the least appearance of a storm, and waited, sometimes for whole months, the return of fine weather. With such vessels it was impossible to tack, and the wind was favourable for them only when right abaft.

(c) Thucydides, lib. i. The Grecian fleet, which sailed for Troy, consisted only of vessels that had no decks.

We left the port of La Sude at sun-rise : a fresh breeze filled our triangular sails, and we continued rapidly to plough the surface of the deep. Our course lay towards Argentiera. We long kept in view behind us the majestic head of Cape Melec, and the lofty mountains of Sphachia, which lost themselves in the clouds. As we advanced, they diminished in the horizon, and about noon wholly disappeared, leaving us furrounded only with the vast expanse of sea.

The first time you venture on the ocean with these little boats, which, in the grand scene that presents itself to the eye, appear like walnut-shells, the mind is struck with astonishment. Seated on the deck, you touch with your hand the water, foaming under its sides. On the brink of the abyss, you seek in the horizon a place of refuge against the tempest ; but the eye discovers nothing but the immensity of the waters and the heavens, and a sentiment of fearful awe penetrates the soul. Experience, however, soon dissipates these vain terrors, and man, to whom habit familiarizes every thing, delights to brave, with such feeble means, the fury of the waves. The Greek mariners, well acquainted

quainted with all the harbours of the Archipelago, and guided by prudence, put their vessels before the wind, when the tempest begins to threaten, and seek for shelter in some neighbouring island. Not less prudent than their ancestors (*d*), they lay up their boats in harbour during the winter, and wait for the return of summer, before they trust themselves anew to the inconstant element.

During the whole day we had a serene sky, and a favourable wind, which enabled us to make a great way, and at nine in the evening we anchored in the port of Argentiera, after a run of thirty sea-leagues. M. Brest presented us to his father, who received us with great politeness, and invited us to take up our residence in his house.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(*d*) The ancient Greeks and Romans, not having a navy like ours, nor ships capable of resisting tempests, seldom made voyages in winter, but waited till the spring, and the return of fine weather.

LET-

L E T T E R XLI.

To M. L. M.

I LEFT Canea with an intention to go to Constantinople ; but on our arrival at Argentiera, learning that the plague was then ravaging the capital of the Ottoman empire, I immediately laid aside my project. In vain did my travelling companions, who had business in that city, solicit me to proceed with them. I had seen too much of the dreadful effects of this terrible distemper ! The dismal scenes I had witnessed were still present to my memory. I already imagined I beheld the unhappy victims, struck as with lightning, suddenly dropping down dead ; others, with haggard eyes, and inflamed countenances, expiring in the convulsions of a horrible delirium. I seemed to hear the shrieks of the women, and the howlings of the public mourners.

mourners. These sad spectacles, which recurred to my imagination in all their horror, rendered me immovable in my resolution. I resisted every importunity, wished my companions a good journey, and remained at Argentiera.

This little island, which was formerly called Cimolus, is only six leagues in circumference: the soil is extremely dry, and destitute of springs, nor is there any water here but what is collected in cisterns, or brought from Melos, an island at a little distance; the hills, vales, and the whole country stripped of trees, do not offer a single shade to defend you from the heat of the sun. The Venetians, during their war with the Turks, cut down all the olive-trees, and did irreparable damage to the island; nor do the present inhabitants dare to make fresh plantations, lest they should draw on themselves heavier impositions. Thus does the Ottoman government uniformly act towards its subjects; if they manifest any industry, it is immediately taxed, and stifled in its birth!

Argentiera presents nothing but rocky hills, destitute of verdure, and vallies producing worthless shrubs, and thorny thickets.

The

The vales are generally covered with a white and flat clay, called by the ancients *Terra Cimolia*, or *Cimolia Creta* (Fuller's-earth), and which the inhabitants employ, instead of soap, to wash their linen. This barren soil seems but ill adapted to agriculture; yet the industrious islanders make it produce them a subsistence. They sow barley and wheat at the beginning of autumn, which is the rainy season, and reap in March. Their vineyards on the hill-sides furnish them with fruit only for the table. They procure their wines from Santorini, Milo, and other islands of the Archipelago. They rear poultry, and flocks of goats and sheep, the flesh of which is excellent. The country affords them quails, hares and partridges in abundance. The women knit cotton stockings, and the men employ themselves in fishing and navigation. Excellent fish are taken round the island, especially the *Rouget* (*e*), which is very delicate eating.

The little tribe which inhabits *Argentiera*, is composed of about five hundred persons.

(*e*) This fish is well known, and highly esteemed on all the coasts of the Mediterranean; it is met with at *Marfeilles* and *Toulon*, and throughout *Provence*.

Their

Their enjoyments are not many, but, thanks to their industry, they want none of the necessaries of life. This little island indeed does not groan under the immediate oppressions of the officers of the Porte; here are no Agas, nor Cadis. The Turks would not venture to reside here, as there is no fort to prevent the Maltese from making them prisoners, whose privateers come hither, from time to time, to spend in feasts, entertainments, and pleasures of every kind, the money they have taken from the Mahometans. This is a tribute they pay to the pretty women of Argentiera. In a word, the Greeks who inhabit this rock would be happy, were the Captain Pacha but to forget them in the annual contributions he levies, frequently with barbarity, on the islands of the Archipelago. Besides the poll-tax, to which all the Greeks are subject, he exacts presents sometimes amounting to the value of the tribute; and his officers know perfectly how to imitate his example. These extortions are attended with the most fatal consequences, and reduce the islanders to the most extreme misery.

During my stay in this country, I lodged with M. Brest, the French vice-consul, an intel-

intelligent man, with much firmness of character, and a noble and generous soul. He is perfectly acquainted with all the ports of the Mediterranean, and has often served as a pilot to the French ships in these seas. He has made himself adored by the inhabitants, by saving them from the plunder of the Corsairs, and by interceding with the officers sent by the Captain Pacha to lay them under contribution; he may be considered, therefore, as the chief of this little republic, or the king of the island. This worthy man has resided upwards of forty years at Argentiera, and has two sons, the eldest, whom I have already mentioned, and a younger, now at sea; both are great travellers, and well educated; they speak French, Italian, Greek, and Turkish perfectly, and appear worthy to succeed their father. He has also a daughter, who is young, tall, handsome, and of a most amiable disposition; she is the delight of the good old gentleman; and, by the endearing attentions of filial tenderness, consoles him for the frequent absence of his other children.

The dress of the Greek women of Argentiera is, in some particulars, a little whimsical.

In France, a neat leg and a small foot are in high estimation, but the belles of Argenticera are of a different opinion; they swell out their legs by wearing several pair of stockings, and appear as if they were booted, which strange kind of ornament they consider as an essential part of dress; and lest it should be lost to the eye, their garments do not descend above two inches below the knee. These too are so contrived, as absolutely to spoil their shape, and render it impossible to form any idea of the beautiful proportions with which they were formed by Nature. I am at a loss to conceive what can have induced them to adopt so very extravagant a dress. In other respects they are cheerful, lively, and handsome. M. Brest, who is no indifferent judge of beauty, introduced me into some houses where I was astonished to find, under rustic roofs, young women with the most charming faces. If you represent to them that they disguise, by such preposterous ornaments, some of the loveliest of their charms; their answer is, "Our grandmothers were clad
 "in the same way; we do but follow the cus-
 "tom." Shall custom then always tyrannize over reason? But in a small island, which
 the

the women never quit, and where they hardly ever see any strangers, the difference of whose dress might make impression on them, fashions, however absurd, must be unchangeable, nor can it be expected that any individual should dare throw off the yoke.

Fronting Argentiera is a long barren rock, called the Burnt Island; in the channel between, ships find safe anchoring; and small vessels may enter the harbour, where they have sufficient depth of water. This is the only landing-place, for in every other part of the island the shore is steep, and surrounded by inaccessible rocks. The village, built on the summit of a pretty lofty eminence, commands the shipping; the declivity is so steep, that if a battery were erected there, to ascend it would be impossible.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T-

L E T T E R XLII.

To M. L. M.

FROM Argentiera, Madam, the isle of Melos is in full view, and is distant only half a league. Its modern name is Milo or Mile. Anciently it had a town of the same name, built by the Phœnicians (*f*). That maritime people, attracted by the beauty of its port, undoubtedly made it an emporium of their commerce. This harbour, the mouth of which faces the North West, retreats within the land, forming various windings, and suddenly opens out into a spacious basin, in which ships of all sizes may anchor, sheltered from every wind, and even the largest fleet ride with safety and convenience.

This island was long rich and populous, and in early antiquity enjoyed perfect free-

(*f*) Stephan. Byzant. The city of Melos was founded by the Phœnicians.—Festus Pompeius adds, Melo, leaving the coasts of Phœnicia, built the city to which he gave his name.

D d

dom.

dom. The Athenians, unable to bring the people of Melos to declare in their favour, in the Peloponnesian war, made a descent upon their coasts, and laid all waste before them with fire and sword. Twice did they fail in their enterprize; but returning with more numerous forces, they laid siege to Melos, and having reduced the besieged to surrender at discretion (*g*), put to the sword every man capable of bearing arms. They spared only the women and children, whom they carried off into captivity. This atrocious action makes us blush for humanity, and dishonours the Athenian name. But war was then carried on with a barbarity of which we have now no example. Republics know not how to pardon, and always carry their vengeance to excess. Lyfander the Lacedæmonian general, having, in his turn, subdued the Athenians (*b*), obliged them to recal the colony they had sent to Melos, and restored to the island the wretched remains of its inhabitants.

This island lost its liberty when the Romans, aspiring to the empire of the world,

(*g*) Strabo, lib. x.

(*b*) Plutarch, in Vitâ Lyfandri.

conquered the whole Archipelago. In the partition of that monarchy, it fell to the eastern emperors; was afterwards governed by its own dukes, and finally was conquered by Soliman II. Since that period it has groaned beneath Ottoman despotism, and is completely deprived of its importance. M. Brest assured me, that, in his youth, it was extremely fertile in corn, wine, and fruits, and contained upwards of twenty thousand inhabitants. M. Tournefort, who visited it in 1700, gives a delightful description of this island. "The earth, constantly heated by subterraneous fires, produces, almost without intermission, wheat, barley, cotton, exquisite wines, and delicious melons. Saint Elie, the most beautiful monastery in the island, and situated on the highest ground, is surrounded by cedars, and orange, lemon, and fig-trees. The gardens are watered by copious streams. Olive-trees, which are rare in other parts, are very numerous round this monastery, and the adjoining vineyards furnish excellent wine. In a word, all the productions of the island are of incomparable excellence. Its partridges, quails, kids, and lambs, are in high estimation, yet extremely cheap."

Could M. Tournefort return to Milo, he would no longer find the beauteous isle he has described. He would still see the feathered alum, with silver threads, suspended from the roofs of caverns, fragments of pure sulphur filling the crevices, of the rocks, numerous mineral springs, hot baths, and the same fires which, in his time, heated the bosom of the earth, and rendered it so fertile. But instead of the five thousand Greeks paying the capitation (*i*), he would now find, on a surface of eighteen leagues in circumference, only about seven hundred inhabitants. He would sigh to behold the finest parts of the country without cultivation, and fertile vallies changed into morasses. Milo has assumed a very different appearance within the course of the last fifty years. The plague, every where propagated by the Turks, has cut off the greatest part of its inhabitants; and the detestable government of the Porte, and the oppressions of the Captain Pacha, have completed its destruction. At present, the want

(*i*) I have said that adults alone were subject to the capitation; if, therefore, we add women and children to the above number of 5000, there must have been, in the time of Tournefort, at least 20,000 souls.

of labourers prevents their giving a free course to the water, which stagnating in the valleys, turns fetid, and infects the air with putrid exhalations. The salt-marshes, which have multiplied for want of care, produce the same effect. If to these inconveniencies the sulphureous vapours which rise on every side are added, you will not be surpris'd to learn, Madam, that the inhabitants of Milo are tormented with violent fevers during three quarters of the year. Nay, possibly, they will be under the necessity of totally abandoning their country. Their complexions are universally of a yellow, pale, and deadly hue; nor is the look of health to be found in any one of them. The prudent traveller should take care to make but a short stay in this unhealthy country, if he would not expose himself to a fever. Only to sleep a single night in the island, nay even to pass the day there, is sometimes sufficient to contract that disease.

An enlightened government might remove these calamities which have so depopulated Melos. Its first care ought to be to establish a Lazaretto, and prevent the approach of infected vessels. Canals should then
be

be cut to drain the marshes, from which arise pestiferous exhalations. The island would repeople : for the sulphureous vapours are not what most render it desolate ; it produced them equally in the time of the ancients (*k*), yet it was extremely populous. M. Tournefort, who visited it at a period much nearer the conquest of the Turks, and before they had time wholly to lay it waste, still reckoned twenty thousand inhabitants. To the despotism of the Turkish government, therefore, and its detestable politics, must we attribute the destruction of the island of Melos. Let me not be accused of painting the Turks in colours blacker than they deserve. I have travelled through their empire, I have seen the injuries of every kind which they have done to the sciences, the arts, and the human race. I see them carrying the plague with them, from island to island, from country to country, without suffering their eyes to be opened by the example of every other nation ; and shall I not raise my voice

(*k*) Pliny (lib. xxxv. cap. 15.) speaks of the great quantities of sulphur produced at Melos, and esteems it as the best any where to be found.

against

against the abominable indifference of this barbarous people ! Shall I not inveigh against their destructive fatalism, and endeavour to find words sufficiently forcible to paint the crimes and horrors of their government, of that government, the enemy of the human species, which has destroyed more men by its odious tyranny, than ever fell by the sword of the most cruel conquerors ! At the sight of these melancholy spectacles my heart groans, and is filled with indignation ; my blood boils in my veins, and I could wish to excite all Europe to combine against these Turks, who, descending from the mountains of Armenia, have crushed the nations in their passage, and waded through rivers of blood to the throne of Constantinople. Nor have the beautiful countries they inhabit been able to soften the ferocity of their character. Power is their law ; their justice is the fabre.

I have the honour to be, &c.

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